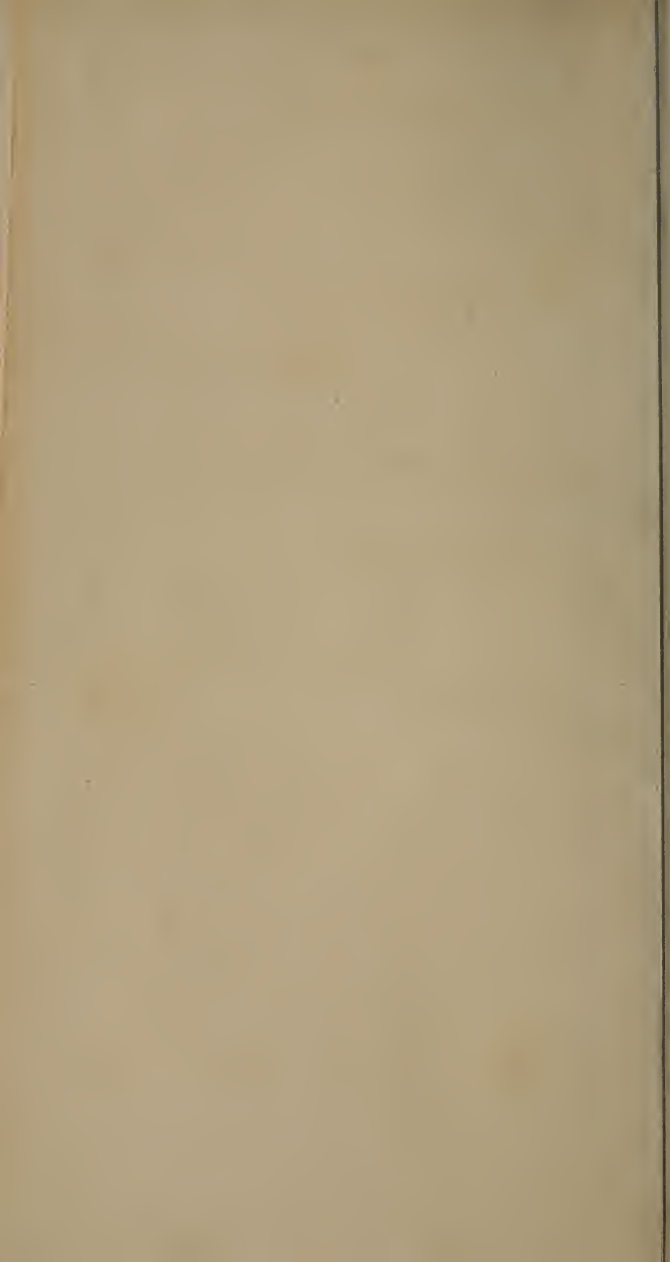


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VIRGINIA ;

OR THE

PEACE OF AMIENS.



VOL. II.

ALPHABET

THE

ART OF WRITING

—

OF

VIRGINIA;
OR THE
PEACE OF AMIENS.
A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MISS EMMA PARKER,
AUTHOR OF ELFRIDA, HEIRESS OF BELGROVE.

VOL. II.

"Peace once more hover'd o'er a weary world,
"Yet smiled she not, but half reluctant shed
"Her balmy influence, while martial sounds
"In distant murmurs rung, receding slow,
"And dubious of return."

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR B. CROSBY AND CO.
STATIONERS'-COURT, LUDGATE-HILL.

1811.

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v. 2

PRELUDE

TO

VOLUME THE SECOND.



I AM afraid the Reader will be inclined to form a very unfavourable opinion of my sensibility, and think me extremely hard-hearted, for leaving the voyagers in such unfortunate plight, and for taking a period like the present to resume my prosing. But my obstinate and

headstrong imagination will insist upon having its own way, and resolutely refuses to confine itself to the thread of the narrative, until it be first exercised, in an unconstrained range, through the wilds of liberty, darting into every path that caprice entices to, equally regardless of the point it has started from, and of the goal of its ultimate destination.

Victor Alfieri says—"I have likewise experienced that my intellectual faculties resemble a barometer, and that I possess more or less talent for composition in proportion to the weight of the atmosphere."

A most excellent suggestion ! for which I feel (as all authors ought to feel) very sincerely obliged to this *quicksilver* ge-

nus; and eagerly seizing on this precedent, I shall not scruple to impute all the dulness, monotony, and insipidity of thought, that has ever betrayed itself in my writings, or ever may, entirely to the influence of the atmosphere, when no candid or liberal reader can possibly attach the slightest blame to me.

Nature has no appeal against physical influence, and if the weight of the atmosphere bears heavy on my brains, it is absolutely unconscionable to expect them to exert themselves. Therefore, instead of condemning me, and others, for what we are unable to resist, it would be much more charitable, wise, and good-natured, and, at the same time, incalculably beneficial to the cause of learning, and powers of genius, if some profound-

ly enlightened, elementary *hydrostatical*, *carbonical*, *homogeneous*, *atmospherical* philosopher, would seriously set about discovering, accumulating, and preparing a new and perfected description of *attic* gas! which he might preserve and confine in bottles.

With a due proportion of this we might rarefy and lighten the atmosphere of our studies, which doubtless would have an immediate effect in removing the density from our brains. At the same time that so glorious and enlightened a discovery would for ever immortalize the fortunate inventor of this invaluable commodity, for which he might obtain a patent, and sell it under the title of "*The Anti-Gnosimachi, or Ethereal Thickscullian Clarifier*;" and it

would no doubt in time obtain as much celebrity as the Imperial Persian Cream (for boot-tops), or even the far-famed Balm of Gilead. The sale of it could not be questioned, as perhaps no complaint is more prevalent than that for which it would offer an antidote.

However, until this notable discovery is accomplished, I shall avail myself of *that* made by Alfieri, which furnishes so excellent an excuse for mental lethargy.

He further observes—"During the prevalence of the solsticial and equinoctial winds, I was always remarkably stupid."

Oh, happy Alfieri! only to be afflicted

in this way at *particular* periods! I am almost apprehensive the Reader will imagine, that the solstitial and equinoctial winds extend their influence over me all the year round.

Again he says—"I likewise perceived that the force of my imagination, the ardour of enthusiasm, and capability of invention, were possessed by me in a higher degree in the middle of winter, or in the middle of summer, than during the intermediate periods; and this *materiality* he believes common to all men (and of course women) of a delicate and nervous system. I am neither delicate or nervous, thank Heaven! but yet, alas! this *materiality* is very common to me, and not only in spring and autumn, but in winter and summer; and while I con-

tinue under its influence, the Reader must be condemned to follow me in my flighty lucubrations, if he does not get completely out of patience, and throw me aside in a rage, for, until I have systematized my ideas a little, I cannot pretend to go on with my story.

would rather be influenced by the
 will to contribute to the good of
 society (which is the duty of every
 citizen) than of passion and
 the desire for a good, which I have
 not yet seen. I cannot be
 said to be in the right.

VIRGINIA ;

OR THE

PEACE OF AMIENS.

CHAP. I.

Wide over the tremulous sea

The moon spread her mantle of light,
And the gale wafting clouds in her way,
Breath'd hoarse on the bosom of night.

On the forecastle pensive he stood,

And pour'd forth his sorrowful tale,
His tears fell unseen in the flood,
His sighs pass'd unheard in the gale.

ON going upon deck Charles found that the gale had considerably encreased, the clouds were heavy and tempestuous, and the receding land was lost in the

obscurity of night. He addressed his friend, with whose gloomy cogitations the scene perfectly corresponded; but Villeroy was thoughtful and abstracted, and total silence speedily ensued, which remained uninterrupted till they were informed they might go below, as the ladies had all retired to their births.

Villeroy and Charles descended, and quietly took possession of their resting places, and soon after all the passengers (to use a sea phrase) had *turned in*.

Charles overheard the murmurs of discontent from some one who lay immediately over him, and he soon recognised the voice of the lusty gentlewoman grumbling at her straitened accommodation, and the utter impossibility of any person placing themselves at their ease in such miserable holes. She made several violent efforts to arrange herself to her satisfaction; and Charles was somewhat

appalled by the dread that the boards under her would give way, when the huge burthen must have fallen immediately on him. But a still greater inconvenience soon assailed him; a thin board alone separated his head from that of the Abbé, who now commenced a sonorous strain, while the strong effluvia of garlic which his breath exhaled made its way through the cracks of the boards. This Charles could not support, and with precipitation he turned himself out, and, throwing the pillow to the other end of the berth, he again laid down, and every time the Abbé's notes encreased to a climax that grated on his nerves, Charles kicked his feet with a start against the partition. The first time this occurred the poor priest jumped up in terror, imagining the ship had struck upon a rock, or had run foul of some other vessel; but, on finding that the shock was not repeated, and that she appeared to be going on at a great rate, he turned himself round,

and very soon recommenced his *nezical* exertions.

Villeroy lay immediately over him, and was, as well as most of the other passengers, kept awake by his discordant strains.

Charles, finding that the Abbé, on getting accustomed to the kicks at his head, ceased to be disturbed by them, again, in a fit of impatience, turned himself out of the birth, and dragging the matrass after him, he spread it on the cabin floor, and threw himself upon it (they had none of them undressed); but the motion of the vessel was now so great, that he found it impossible to retain his place on the matrass; he was rolled from side to side of the cabin, and with much difficulty succeeded in re-establishing himself and his matrass in the birth.

The Irish ensign now popped his head

out from between the little curtains that concealed his resting place, which was over that occupied by his *friend* Miss Pringle, who he had been annoying to the utmost of his power, by jigging, knocking, picking his nails, and gnashing his teeth. He now vociferated with an oath, *Mounser* parson you! halloo, I say! the d— take me if I don't believe you have got a post horn there; let me tell you, *mounser*, it is not polite to be bothering all your bed-fellows with your abominable grunting, for all the world like a pig in a sty. You had better be after giving over now, or d— burn me if I don't stop your pipe!"

The Abbé heard him not, the roaring of the sea, and the noise he himself made, prevented this *elegant* speech from reaching his ears.

The deadly sickness which had for some time oppressed Miss Pringle, sub-

sided on her lying down, and she now began to entertain a strong degree of terror at the violence of the storm. No longer able to lay quietly listening to the bursting of the billows against the creaking sides of the vessel, she sat up, and reaching her pink bonnet from the foot of the bed, she put it on over her night-cap, and then ventured to put her head out, as she exclaimed, "Oh, for heaven's sake! gentlemen, tell me if you we not in very great danger! I am terrified to death; we had better go on deck; we shall have no chance of being saved if we stay down here; the deluge will pour in on us, and we shall all be drowned in our beds."

At this moment she felt something strike her head, which sent her bonnet flying to the farthest part of the cabin, while the Ensign, from whose leg, suddenly thrown out of the birth above her, she had received the blow, cried out,

“ Indeed, and you’re right enough, so we had best be trying which can get out fastest.”

But such was not his real design, for he entertained no fears whatever; but inferring from the sound of Miss Pringle’s voice that her head projected from the birth beneath, he had purposely thrown his leg out so as to come in contact with her bonnet, at the same time that he leant forward to witness the effect; and affecting to make a catch to impede the flight of the bonnet, he actually pulled off the cap, and band of ringlets, which had been kept on to render the former more becoming; and the hapless head was left without any covering, save a few thinly scattered grey hairs, which so far from considering as honorable, the exasperated spinster, incensed almost to madness, conceived it the greatest disgrace to have displayed. The Ensign was voluble in his apologies to

the insulted lady, protesting, that the misfortune he had occasioned was entirely accidental. To picture her horror and distress is utterly impossible, half screaming, half sobbing, she endeavoured to rise in order to recover her cap and bonnet, having first tied her pocket handkerchief over her head.

Villeroy, with the compassion which peculiarly characterised him, immediately quitted his uneasy pillow, where he found it impossible to get a moment's sleep, and rendered the hapless fair one all the assistance in his power.

Charles was about to rise also, when a violent combustion above his head, and a cry of, "we are all going to the bottom," made him emerge with precipitation from his covert. The cry proceeded from the lusty gentlewoman, who was vainly attempting to descend from her elevated situation, and now piteously im-

plored some one to assist her. Charles lent her his aid.

“The water is all coming in,” cried she ;
“pray, Sir, help me to *unload*, or it will
be impossible I can be saved.”

As she said this she began undressing herself in great haste, and threw two wallets from her sides, out of which tumbled silver spoons, forks, salt cellars, and various other contraband articles. She entreated Charles to hold one end of a piece of cambric muslin, when, turning herself round and round, like a tetotum, she rapidly disengaged herself from this, and several other pieces, when the *lusty* gentlewoman was reduced to a very moderate sized person, and piously fell on her knees to say her prayers, regardless of her merchandize which was scattered in all directions. Having disencumbered herself from it, she thought she might have some chance of saving her life,

should she be obliged to make any extraordinary exertions for its preservation.

Upon examination it was discovered, that the water from the deck had made its way into the lady smuggler's bed, but to a very trifling degree.

Cordelia now thought it high time to manifest her terrors, which she did by screams more audible than interesting. This was the signal for the man-milliner to jump up, and by his assistance the young lady was supported from falling.

This general and violent confusion at length awoke Monsieur l'Abbé, who, on perceiving that every one was up but himself, bounced out of his berth very incautiously, and was precipitated from one end of the cabin to the other, and his head coming in contact with a fixed lamp, which had hitherto afforded light,

shivered it into atoms, and extinguished the friendly luminary, which had till then prevented the horrors of darkness being added to their other distresses, and the party was instantly involved in total obscurity.

“ Oh, my poor head !” cried the Abbé,
“ I break my brains !”

To describe the confusion that now reigned would, indeed, be a difficult task, nor is it necessary to expatiate upon it.

Villeroy and Charles succeeded in gaining the cabin door, and mounting the steps of the companion they knocked loudly, and supplicated to be let on deck ; but they were told that the hatches were closed, and could not be opened without danger of the water's entering the cabin, as the waves were making a clear passage over the deck, but that there was no actual danger, and should

they come above they would instantly be wet through.

Under these circumstances, our friends were compelled to remain where they were, and they made up their minds to passing the remaining hours of darkness on the steps of the companion, where they seated themselves, being resolved not to re-enter the horrible cabin. Having continued there for some time, they rejoiced to perceive that the motion of the vessel was less violent, from which they inferred that the storm was abating, which it did gradually; and when, at length, they were permitted to come on deck, they had the satisfaction of finding themselves close off the port of Calais. The Captain informed them, that as the tide would soon turn, it would be some time yet before the packet could get in; but as he himself intended to take the boat and go on shore directly, they could, if they chose it, accompany

him. Of this opportunity they gladly availed themselves, and having seen their baggage stowed in the boat, they followed, and in a very short time were safely landed on the long hostile shore.

I forbear to say any thing more of the party left on board the packet, believing the reader to be totally uninterested respecting it ; but I will not promise that some of the individuals that formed it shall not again appear on the tapis.

CHAP. II.



Go where ye list, on this sad earth,
Some soul-corroding care has birth;
And Grief in all her accents speaks !
Here dark Dejection groans, and there
Wild Phrenzy, daughter of Despair,
Unconscious shrieks !

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

OUR friends remained no longer at Calais than it required to effect the liberation of their trunks from the custom house, when they immediately set off for Boulogne, the road conducting thro' that town being the best, tho' perhaps not the shortest to Paris. They were besides desirous of visiting that place (Boulogne)

and of surveying the harbour, which by the way is one of the worst on the Gallic coast, as a bar runs across the mouth of it which prevents the entrance of any vessel of considerable size, and none of any description can gain access except at high water. The tide recedes for near a mile, and the sands, extending for several leagues along the coast, are delightful to walk or ride on. It is much more uncommon to see a lady on horse-back in France than it is in England—and it would be next to impossible for an Englishwoman to retain her seat upon a French side saddle, at least, such as are to be met with in the country towns, the crutch which sustains the knee being seldom more than two or three inches high, and the seat of the saddle stuffed so as to be nearly parallel with it. But no doubt, in Paris, they are upon a superior construction. Indeed the horses and saddles in the Provinces, are very much of a piece; and no one who would

wish to avoid a strong probability of breaking their necks should attempt to mount a French hackney. Villeroy and his companion remained some hours at Boulogne, and after going down to the port and traversing the low town, the streets of which are wide and have a lighter, and less melancholy appearance than those in most French towns, they proceeded to the *haute ville*, and here, after you have surveyed the *Grand Place*, and the Evêché, nothing but the most monastic gloom distinguishes the buildings.

The walls, which extend round the high town are in very good repair; and, in most parts, planted with trees in rows, and afford an agreeable promenade to the inhabitants. From hence the low town, and harbour, appear to great advantage. Prior to the revolution there were two convents in the *haute ville*; the Ursulins, which is now totally de-

stroyed, and the Annunciates, now converted into a common gaol. There was also a most magnificent cathedral which fell a sacrifice to the fury of the Revolutionists. Of this scarcely a vestige now remains, and a heap of mouldering ruins alone mark the spot where once it proudly rose, a noble monument of sacred splendour! The decorations of the interior were dazzling to behold, and the whole edifice a master-piece of architectural grandeur! Now levelled with the dust!

No Prophet bards, thy glittering courts among,
Wake the full lyre, and swell the tide of song:
But lawless Force, and meagre Want is here,
And the quick darting eye of restless Fear;
While cold Oblivion, 'mid thy ruins laid,
Folds his dark wing beneath the ivy shade.

In mentioning the convent of the Annunciates, I should have recounted an extraordinary anecdote connected with that monastery,—I will here insert it, exactly as it has been repeated to me by

those who were on the spot at the time it occurred.

About two years before the revolution burst forth in all its violence, the circumstance I am about to relate took place.

The Annunciates was an open convent, and admitted boarders, amongst whom were several young English women, who resorted there for the purpose of finishing their educations. At the period above alluded to, a person calling herself Miss W——e, was received into the convent, and remained there some time, without exciting any particular notice, when suddenly she drew upon her the observation of the English, (and probably of the French) then resident at Boulogne, by the extraordinary boldness and effrontery of her behaviour, and the wildness and imprudence of her conduct; and it began to be whispered that she was not,

what she wished to appear. Some very strange suspicions were awakened, of which she probably gained intelligence; as she formed a sudden determination of returning to England, which she accordingly did. Several English persons witnessed her embarkation; she was dressed in a riding habit, and hat and feathers; her appearance was extremely masculine, and her gait awkward and unfeminine. A few days after this person's departure, one of the unfortunate sisterhood was seized with most alarming symptoms of insanity; fits, hysterics, and delirium; evinced the strongest paroxisms of despair: and the dreadful truth was revealed that the person known under the appellation of Miss W——e, was of that sex to which his inhuman conduct was the foulest disgrace. Another wretched victim put a period to her own existence, unable to support the agonies of remorse and shame.

It was afterwards rumoured that this monster of cruelty, had been instigated to this outrage, by the petty consideration of obtaining a sum of money which depended on a bet he had made, that he would spend a stated period in a convent of Nuns without the imposture being discovered. I never heard if the wretch met with the reward of his crimes, nor indeed any thing more concerning him, but doubtless, he will not go unpunished. The fact here related, can be attested by so many persons in whose memories the circumstance must still survive, that it is unnecessary to make any farther protestations of its veracity.

CHAP. III.



If on the sons the parents' crimes descend,
What prince from those his lineage can defend?
Be this thy comfort, that 'tis thine t' efface,
With virtuous acts thy ancestors' disgrace,
And be thyself the honour of thy race.

Thebais of Statius. POPE.

IT was the design of Villeroy and Clifford to proceed straight to Paris, but as they advanced on their journey, the aspect of things appeared to them so unlike that of a country sinking into the bosom of peace, and the reports in circulation conveyed so very slender a hope of permanent tranquillity, that Colonel Villeroy thought it most prudent not to venture into the heart of the country till

public affairs bore a more propitious aspect. Having reached L——, they resolved to remain there some weeks, and speedily succeeded in getting board and lodging in a French family upon very reasonable terms.

This agreed perfectly well with Villeroy's system of economy, and to Charles it was peculiarly desirable, as he had thus an opportunity of improving himself in the French language before he made his *debut* in the capital.

The family in which they were now established, consisted of an old lady, the widow of a *procureur*, and her daughter, pretty, lively, coquetish girl. There were two other boarders besides our Englishmen; one, a *ci-devant* general, who had been disabled in the service of Bonaparte; the other, an old gentleman, about seventy; he was of Scotch extraction, and had served forty years in the

Scotch brigade, in the pay of the unfortunate Lewis the Sixteenth, and his predecessor, but had never reached beyond the rank of captain. He had been driven to England by the revolution, which had compelled him to remain there some years, much against his inclination, for his taste being vitiated by a long residence in France, he had lost all zest for the land of comfort, and eagerly seized the first opportunity that offered of returning with safety to the country he preferred to all others. His income was extremely slender, and would barely have supported him had it not been for a regular traffic, which he nightly carried on at the whist table. He played remarkably well, and generally won three times out of four ; but as it was known, and allowed, that he owed his good fortune to his skill, and not to any unfair advantage which he might have taken, there was always a party ready to engage with him, for the town afforded a very

tolerable society. Captain Ferguson was by no means ungentlemanlike in his manners; of his language I cannot speak so favourably, it was an *unhappy* mixture of anglicised French, and frenchified English, both equally incorrect, and delivered with a total disregard of grammar, gender, or idiom; and it was impossible to discover by his speech to which of the two countries he had a just claim.

The other boarder was a man of a very different description; he was always addressed by the appellation of *Mon Général*, but notwithstanding he had attained that rank, and was incapacitated from doing his duty, he was little more than thirty years of age. He had risen rapidly to the head of his profession, and a most extraordinary rise it would have been esteemed in any other country than that of which he was a native; but there his good fortune was by no means unprecedented. Ten years before *M n Général*

ral had been a *traiteur* in a small provincial town, and had with great reluctance relinquished his trade, when compelled by a conscription to serve in the army. Nature had endowed him with a blind intrepidity that rendered him regardless of danger, more for want of thought than genuine courage; this, together with a ferocious propensity to shedding blood, greatly recommended him to his commander, and enabled him to perform many acts which were by him esteemed valiant. Each of them were followed by immediate promotion, and the *traiteur* was speedily transformed into a general; when receiving a severe wound in his right shoulder, he was permitted to retire from the service, and he took up his residence *chez Madame le Brule*, to whom he was distantly related.

This man was vulgar and presuming, and but for one circumstance, our Eng-

lishmen would have greatly regretted being domesticated under the same roof with him. *Mon Général* had not forgotten his old trade, and he was always to be found in the kitchen during the time dinner was preparing, owing to which it was always served up most excellently cooked, as *Mon Général* consulted his own pallet, while he paid very little consideration to Madame le Brule's purse. He had obtained complete dominion over the old lady, who dared not oppose him in any thing. From this cause it arose that our friends saw nothing of that parsimony, and want of *substance*, which generally characterises a French boarding-house dinner. They found that several English families were already settled at L ——— ; and on repairing to the billiard-room, they met many of their countrymen, and very few Frenchmen, of whom the former seemed extremely shy, while they immediately made advances to Villeroy and Clifford,

and appeared anxious to enlist them at once into the English *coterie*. But this was by no means Villeroy's desire ; he suspected that this circle did not consist of the most choice description of persons his country could produce ; an opinion in which he was confirmed, by witnessing the anxiety with which they pursued the game they were engaged in, and by observing sums betted, and played for, which plainly evinced that a thirst of gain, and not a pleasing pastime, was the motive which assembled them together.

Disgusted at once with this set, Villeroy and Charles disengaged themselves from it as soon as they possibly could without being guilty of actual rudeness, but not before they had received several invitations to the houses of individuals, who were married men. As they proceeded homeward, Villeroy very freely gave his opinion of the people they had just left to his friend ; and they agreed,

that it would be most prudent to avoid making any intimacies with persons, who appeared to them rather in a doubtful light; and the majority of whom, they strongly suspected, had quitted their own country because they were too well known in it to live there, either with credit or convenience. Yet, as pointedly to avoid all their own countrymen would have had a strange appearance, they resolved, as it was the custom of the place for the stranger to call first, to drop their cards at all the English houses, as well as of those of the French families; and this they accordingly did a few days after their arrival, and an inundation of invitations speedily poured in upon them. These Colonel Villeroy would immediately have declined, had he considered only his own feelings, for a promiscuous society, such as was now open to him, was what above all things he most disliked. He had exhaustless resources within himself, and could fill up every moment of

his time both pleasantly and profitably, and in such parties alone as he was now solicited to join, was he ever vulnerable to the attacks of *ennui*. Though melancholy and dejection, for which he had just cause, would frequently oppress him, his well organized and improved mind could repel with activity their debilitating influence; and by a regular and diligent application of his talents, and encouragement of the many accomplishments he possessed, he created for himself a sort of artificial tranquillity, which he could not have enjoyed had he permitted his imagination to dwell on the cruel reality. That would have presented him in the prime of life, exiled from his country and his friends, compelled to relinquish all pretensions to a woman he now felt he truly loved, while honour forbade him even to solicit her to retain a tender remembrance of him; and thus had he left her, all lovely and engaging as she was, open to the attention of the

many admirers her charms no doubt would attract ; and among whom it was probable she might find one worthy of her choice. Of all this Villeroy was but too sensible, but while he was conscious that he was acting with strict propriety, he could not be perfectly wretched.

Poor Charles was not quite so wisely ingenious as his friend, and felt a disgust, amounting to antipathy, to every thing around him ; he hated France, and every thing that was French, abused and found fault with all that met his eyes, and, in truth, made himself very disagreeable. On his account the Colonel determined to make a trial of the society the town afforded, hoping that Charles might derive some amusement from it, and that when once familiarized to it, he would not require him to accompany him. The first invitation they accepted, was to spend the evening at the house of a Mrs. Braintree, an English lady.

Some idea may be formed of the description of people they were likely to meet at this party, when a sketch is given of the scene which constantly recurred every morning at Mrs. Braintree's residence, which was the regular lounge of every English idler, who was at a loss what to do with himself. And there were many of that class at L——, their whole occupation being to go from house to house gathering news, or rather gossip, all relating to the affairs and circumstances of their acquaintances, and retailing it with their own additions and improvements. The arrival of a stranger was an event which afforded them extreme satisfaction; they never rested till they had made every possible effort to find out his whole history, in which, if they could not succeed, they failed not to draw their own conclusions, which were rapidly circulated as known facts.

Mrs. Braintree was the receiver ge-

neral of all these edifying gleanings, whether real or fictitious, and gave a ready ear to the account, brought her by one of her satellites, of Villeroy and Charles.

“I,” said Mr. Pry, who (after having been at the post-office to examine the directions and post-marks of all the letters, and from thence to the butcher’s to find out what his friends were likely to have for dinner), now came to unload himself of his weighty communications to Mrs. Braintree; “I happened to be in the billiard-room the very first time this *Mr.* Villeroy,” as it seems he calls himself, “and Mr. Clifford, his companion, dropped in there; they did not stay long, so upon their leaving the billiard-room, I followed, and dodged them to the house of Madame Le Brule. I immediately went into the shop of the *patassier* opposite, and asked, in a careless manner (at the same time eating a

tart), if he knew the name of the strangers who had lately come to Madame Le Brule's. He answered in the negative, and at that moment, by the luckiest chance in the world, Madame Le Brule's *cuisiniere* happened to come into the shop, and from her I learnt their names, and some other particulars. They have neither of them men servants, and no doubt are miserably poor. While I was speaking the two gentlemen again came out of the house. I observed to the *cuisiniere*, I could not have believed it possible that the house could accommodate so many people, and asked which of the rooms the strangers occupied. She pointed to the windows of them, said they were very commodious. I affected to doubt her, and treated her to a pie. She laughed at my incredulity, and offered to convince me by letting me see the rooms. This was exactly what I was driving at. I accepted her offer, and I can promise you there was not a single

article in either of the apartments that escaped my observation, and I have made some discoveries too, I assure you. They have got very handsome trunks, and upon one of them is marked, in brass nails, "The Honourable Lieut. Colonel Ville-roy, ——— regiment." Now, is not this most extraordinary? Here, he chooses to call himself simply, *Mr. Villeroy*. You may be sure there is some urgent cause for this mystery!"

"No doubt," observed Mrs. Braintree; "and pray did you discover any thing more? Were there any letters or cards lying about?"

"No, not one, though I looked in every direction; there were two or three musical instruments, and some drawings and plans, and books, but nothing that could convey any information. But, however, I determined not to rest here, so I posted off to Jack Hammond's lodg-

ings, thinking, that as he had been in the army, he might know something of this *Colonel*. 'There I met two or three who had been beforehand with me, and had come to tell him of the fresh arrivals, but none of them knew so much as I did, about them. The moment I mentioned the discovery I had made, Jack cried out, 'I know him, I know him, I'll tell you who he is too; I remember seeing him at Bermuda; he was then on his passage home, and was dying of the yellow fever, or rather from its effects. But what can bring him here?'

"Aye, that is what we want to know," cried I, "and here *in cog*. evidently, or why does he sink the *Colonel*?"

"I did not know him personally," said Jack, "but I remember perfectly well seeing a person of that name one day when I waited on the general at Bermuda; his figure was so remarkable, that

I could not help enquiring who he was, and I was told that he was the *Honourable Colonel Villeroy*, that he was passenger on board the —— the —— I don't know what ship, that had put in to Bermuda, and son to Lord I don't know who—and that is all I know about him."

"Who has got a Court Calendar?" cried I; "Villeroy must be the family name, we shall soon find out the title."

"Aye, who has got a Court Calendar?" they all cried.

What to do we did not know, not one of us had a Court Calendar. At length I recollected old Stokes; ten to one, thought I, he has got one; you know what a fuss he makes about the nobility, because he is hundred-and-fifth cousin to some *Honorable*. Well, off we all set in a body for old Stokes's, Jack

Hammond at the head. Stokes, very fortunately, happened to be at home, and, still more fortunately, happened to have a Court Calendar, which he knows almost by heart, and in five minutes satisfied us as to the birth and parentage of this Villeroy, who is an *eldest* son to Lord Baron Calisbrook, by his lawful wife Anna Maria, only daughter of Henry Lethbridge, of Brookland, in the county of Salop. He was born in June, 1774, and must now be—let us see, 1802—he must now be just eight and twenty. There is another son and a daughter, but this is the man we want to know about.”

“Well, and does any body know any thing of this Lord Calisbrook? Is he rich, and why does his son travel *in cog.*?”

“I will tell you—old Stokes remembers hearing of this Lord when he was in England during the revolution (you

know Stokes lived here for twenty years before the revolution, because he would not pay his debts at home)—well, he says this Lord Calisbrook is a notorious character, that not a tradesman in London will trust him, that he is a swindler, and gambler, in short, every thing that is bad, and there is no doubt the whole family are a set of *raffs*. I dare say this man has been turned out of the army for some shabby trick, or he would not be so ready to drop the *Colonel*. Stokes too remembers hearing that a lad of immense fortune was placed under the guardianship of Lord Calisbrook; this must be Clifford of course; and no doubt can be entertained that this Lord Calisbrook has appropriated the best part of the lad's property to his own use, and sent him abroad to put him out of the way with the slender remains of it, and his son to keep into the bargain."

"Well, I expect them to spend the

evening with me, and I am resolved to call him *Colonel*; we shall see how confused he will look; he of course will conclude we know the whole story of his being turned out of the army."

Thus did these idle, mischievous, and unworthy people, endeavour to reduce every one to their own level, and being sensible that they were neither estimable or respectable themselves, they wished to represent every one else as equally despicable.

CHAP. IV.



Fond love, the gentle vow, the gay desire,
The kind deceit, the still reviving fire,
Persuasive speech, and more persuasive sighs,
Silence that spoke, and eloquence of eyes.

POPE'S HOMER.

MRS. BRAINTREE came to L—, nobody knew why, and lived nobody knew how, though all her associates pretended to be perfectly well acquainted with her motives and means, though no two agreed in the account they gave, and

all were in fact equally ignorant; but she gave very agreeable entertainments, at least what they thought very agreeable, and her house was the point of general rendezvous. And here did our friends repair on the appointed evening, where were assembled nearly all the English that frequented this society; among them were several young ladies, whose dress and manners closely imitated those women, of whom in their own country they had been taught to form the most unfavourable opinion, and to consider themselves as infinitely excelling. Yet these ladies now voluntarily relinquished their long established claim to superiority in prudence, propriety, and the richer gifts of the heart, by condescending to become *French women* in every thing but the name; for, although there was not one French person present on this occasion, and not a single French phrase was spoken, the most indiscreet levity was apparent in the manners and conversation of

the women, while that of the men was unfettered by the smallest degree of constraint. In one room cards and dice were resorted to, and pursued with ungentlemanlike anxiety, while sums were risked which might have satisfied the creditors of some of those present. Another room was opened for the young people, and here games of all descriptions, even down to blindman's-buff and hunt the slipper, were carried on.

These were not "those whims that teach those follies that refine," and our friends returned home thoroughly disgusted with the whole entertainment, as well as with the persons who had formed the party; and marvelling why English people, upon being transplanted from their native soil, should so completely lose their national characteristic, exchanging that steady principle which maintains a uniform propriety in all situations, for

flippant folly, and a levity so unguarded, as barely to fall short of criminality.

“Well,” said Villeroy, “we will try a French party, and if that proves as *ennuyeux* as the one we have just quitted, we will give them up all together, for I am convinced we should spend our evenings much more to our satisfaction at Madame Le Brule’s, where we should at least have the liberty of doing as we pleased.

A few evenings after they repaired to the house of a French lady; they found that five o’clock was the visiting hour, and by a little after five they entered the drawing-room, which was filled with card tables, most of them occupied, and the parties appeared to have been arranged some time. The mistress of the house requested the gentlemen to play, but they declined, being desirous of first observing what was going on. They found that

there was one table of reversie, another of whist, all the rest were engaged by parties of five persons playing at a game they called *breland* or *bouilliotte*, not unlike our common game of brag. No very large sums were risked, yet the parties seemed extremely interested, and those that lost, much discomposed ; very little conversation went on, the whole attention being engrossed by the cards.

Our two friends were the only English persons present, for they were the only two at L——, who had taken the necessary steps for being admitted into the French society. They expected that the serving of tea, coffee, or some other refreshment, would make a break which would afford them an opportunity of introducing some general topic, and of becoming better acquainted with the individuals here assembled. But for this they looked in vain ; the hours passed on without producing any change in the as-

pect of the scene, excepting that the clouds of discontent were removed from one brow to the other according as fortune favoured or neglected them. The women were very much dressed, wearing crapes, satin, gold, and silver; the men looked like valets, or hair-dressers, who had purchased *Sunday* suits from second-hand shops; but in their manners and address they were not vulgar, or at least if they were, that disgusting coarseness, so apparent in English to an English ear, was lost in the harmonious phrases of the French language. No refreshment of any kind appeared. About half past eight the tables began to break up, and our gentleman took advantage of the very first symptoms of a move to make their bows; and extremely glad they were to find themselves at home, when Ville-roy declared, that the stupidity of the French party was equal to that of any of those assemblies in the inland country towns in England, where ten old maids

appear to one old batchelor; and the anxious desire of winning each other's money seems to be the only thing that has power to interest them.

On hearing where they had been, Captain Ferguson observed, that refreshments were seldom given at French houses, but that there were a few families more hospitable, as they gave tea and coffee, with *et ceteras*, that amounted to a complete collation. It was generally announced by the entrance of a servant with napkins, plates, and knives and forks. Each of the guests was supplied with these articles; the napkin was spread on the lap, and the plate rested on it, when large fruit tarts cut in shares was handed round, and succeeded by cakes and sweetmeats. Charles positively declared he would not put his foot into another French or English house, as a visitor, while he remained at L——. His friend said it was unfair to draw conclusions from the little

they had as yet seen of the people ; but he was very glad to find that Clifford was in earnest, and from that time they uniformly declined all the invitations they received ; on which account they soon ceased to be solicited ; and after taking their evening walk, they generally spent a couple of hours with Madame Le Brule, her daughter, *Mon Général*, and Captain Ferguson. To please the latter, Villeroy, who was a very good whist player, consented to make one at the table, which was filled up by Madame Le Brule and *Mon Général*. Thus Charles was left to entertain *Mademoiselle*, or rather *Mademoiselle* was left to entertain Charles.

Villeroy immediately perceived that this would be a very salutary arrangement, as Felice was inclined to afford his friend ample amusement ; she commenced her attack on his heart with all the genuine spirit of coquetry, and exerted all the *agacerie* of her sex and nation to

excite his interest. But Charles drew back with reserve and indifference, and to a common observer would have appeared more annoyed than pleased with this attention; he even believed so himself, and would as leave have admitted thoughts of sacrilege, as that Felice could excite a sensation in a heart that had once been hallowed by the presence of that image, which still frequently recurred to his mind, bringing with it a pang of agonizing regret. But Villeroy was better acquainted with human nature, or rather *man's* nature; and though he was certain that Charles did not, and probably never would, care one straw for Felice, he was convinced he would not long maintain such perfect apathy towards her, provided she persevered in the attack, for if every other passion remained dormant, his vanity would never continue passive, and that once aroused would stimulate an interest in his mind, which in his present mood

could not fail of proving beneficial to him. Villeroy did not even hint to Charles that he thought the little French girl entertained a pre-possession in his favour, fearful that it would make him studiously avoid her, and prevent the possibility of her recalling him from the state of torpor he was now in. For *her* peace, Villeroy experienced no apprehensions, *one* glance of her eye informed him that she was a Frenchwoman *at heart*, and that *that* part of her was as invulnerable to the arrows of Cupid as was Achilles, saving his right heel, to all the arrows of the Trojans.

The opportunity now nightly recurred for Felice to carry on her plan of operations against the heart of the apparently insensible Charles, who, though still affecting to be perfectly indifferent, and by no means proud of his conquest, gave proof to the contrary, by the coquetish airs he gave himself in presence of Fe-

lice, who, being by no means a novice in the art she was practising, was satisfied in finding that she had attracted his notice, nor doubted that she should ultimately succeed in exciting a more lively interest. But in this she would have failed, had it not been for the assistance of a grand auxiliary, who, though an unwilling agent, was the means of promoting and abetting the success of her plan. This appeared in the person of *Mon Général*, who had long been the admirer of *Mademoiselle*, and who very soon evinced signs of strong dissatisfaction at the preference she displayed for the young Englishman.

The pleasure of tormenting *Mon Général* was not to be resisted by Charles, and to that motive he inwardly ascribed the complacency which gradually softened his manners towards Felice, over whom he purposely displayed his power in order to picque the rivalled hero, while

she, more *au fait* at the business than either of them, appeared to have no will but his, and thus by gratifying his vanity endeavoured to find a passage to his heart. Charles would address Felice with an air of mystery, on purpose to make *Mon Général* lose the rubber, and having succeeded in this, he would leave Mademoiselle to herself; but he generally found himself near her again before the evening was over.

CHAP. V.



With lorn delight the scene I view'd,
Past joys and sorrows were renew'd,
My infant hopes and fears,
Look'd lovely thro' the solitude
Of retrospective years.

And still in Memory's twilight bowers,
The spirit of departed hours,
With mellowing tints pourtray,
The blossoms of life's vernal flowers
For ever fallen away!

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

WE will leave our amiable Villeroy
exercising those superior faculties Hea-

ven had blessed him with, and deriving some degree of satisfaction from perceiving that his friend had found something to amuse him; we will leave Charles to torment *Mon Général*, entertain *Made-moiselle*, and make a fool of himself, if he pleases, while we take a rapid flight to that attractive spot which contained Colonel Villeroy's heart enshrined in the lovely form of Virginia Stanhope. Could that young lady have felt assured that she possessed so valuable a treasure, very different would have been her feelings to what they now were. She had left Brighton with a heavy heart, though rejoicing that she was not to remain there. Her friend, Mrs. Pelham, had failed to derive any benefit to her health from this excursion, and returned home more than usually dejected. She was so much attached to Virginia, that it was painful to her to part with her even for a few days; but having so long detained her from her family, whom she was most

anxious to rejoin, Mrs. Pelham permitted her to go home for a short time, on condition that her sister (after their having spent a week together) should come and supply her place.

In the dear domestic circle, Virginia for a short time seemed to have forgotten every cause of uneasiness; she had so much to say, so many events to relate, and such a numerous acquaintance to introduce *by description* to her attentive auditors, and so particular an account to give of her brother's wife, and every one connected with her, (a theme of which she never tired), that she had not leisure to reflect that all the pleasures she was reverting to were past, but enjoyed them again in the charms of retrospection.

But when all this had been repeated, still to have repeated it again would have been wearisome to every one but

herself; and when her sister was gone to Mrs. Pelham's, Virginia felt that she was not the same Virginia that had been wont to enjoy such happy tranquillity, such pleasing contentedness, beneath the paternal roof, ere she had the last time quitted it. Yet she did not wish to leave it again; she felt that change of scene would fail to affect a change in her sensations, and that though she was unhappy at home, she should be more so any where else; for to be deprived of the society of her parents must of course diminish here sources of enjoyment.

But Villeroy, her brother, and his fair partner divided her thoughts, though the former monopolized far the largest share of them; but to the two latter she was tenderly attached—they were traversing the wide Atlantic, and many years might elapse ere she again beheld them, during which they must inevitably be exposed to multiplied dangers.

Villeroy too was parted from her by the waters; he had, perhaps, already forgotten the happy days they had passed together; and the regard she had then flattered herself he experienced for her might now have degenerated into languid indifference.

Eagerly she perused the daily papers her father took in, and felt angry with herself for feeling pleased, on perceiving that the renewal of hostilities between France and England was already rumoured. "Then," thought she, "Villeroy must come home, and he will, perhaps, remember that his friend Stanhope has a sister, whose greatest happiness would be to welcome him to the residence of her family! Oh! selfish creature that I am! to wish the world to be again involved in blood to gratify my private feelings. No, no, impossible; I do not, cannot entertain so impious a desire; but should a war inevitably ensue, and

Villeroy should come home, oh ! I should be most happy."

She had the satisfaction of hearing frequently from Mrs. Villeroy, with whom she kept up a constant correspondence, and who always mentioned, when they had received intelligence from her brother-in-law the Colonel, who often wrote to Clarence.

About this time the receipt of a letter from Captain Stanhope proved a source of rejoicing to his whole family ; and as it contained a very particular and accurate detail of the voyage, it may, perhaps, afford some entertainment to the reader, and also enable us to follow the destinies of those it concerned ; on which account I shall insert this, and some others, that will appear in their proper places, begging leave to add, that the contents, as far as they relate to the description of places, the country, customs,

and manners,* may be depended on as historically correct, although introduced in a Novel.

The letter had been written during the voyage, under various dates, and might rather be termed a journal.



June 13, Nine o'clock. P.M.

“Most beloved parents,

“Though blessed in the possession of a treasure, which makes me think a confinement within an inconvenient transport the most delightful thing in the world, yet, when I turn my eyes from the beloved object who possesses so much of my heart, I can still feel that I am absent from you and my

* These particulars I have gathered from an original correspondence.

sisters, and that while I continue so, one of my principal wishes must remain ungratified.

“ Knowing the interest you will take in the minutest particulars that concerns us, I shall give you an exact account of our voyage as we proceed. Perhaps some lucky chance may afford me an opportunity of dispatching a letter to you before we reach our ultimate destination.

“ We set sail from Spithead the eleventh, went round by St. Helens, and lay too almost the whole of the remaining day off the back of the Isle of Wight, as our commodore waited for a boat which he had sent on shore.

“ I contemplated with delight that beautiful spot, and with the glass could plainly distinguish the cottages and trees ; they seemed to me as some dear friends,

by recalling to my mind various persons with whom I had passed so many happy days there, when we were wont to make parties to this lovely island. But my pleasure was damped by the reflection, that those whose society had given such charms to the scene were now, alas! widely dispersed; some gone for ever, and others far removed.

“I felt sad, but turning my thoughts from “the deeds of the days of other years,” I looked at my Editha, the cloud of regret dispersed, and I fancied the whole world was present.

“Our progress has been but slow; this morning we were off the Start, since then we have made but little way, for it has been almost a calm; there is now a gentle breeze, and we are gliding smoothly along the coast.

“We have all day had a delightful

view of the shore, being most of the time within a league of it. My Editha was somewhat incommoded the first two days, but is now perfectly well, and puts up with every inconvenience with as much cheerfulness as if she had been a soldier's wife these ten years, and had never^d been accustomed to those luxuries and indulgencies she has never till now been deprived of.

“When we have left the channel, which, if this wind continues, will probably be to-morrow evening, we must bid adieu to the sight of land, perhaps, till we reach our destined port. Editha says there is something awful in the thought, but though she shudders, she smiles at the same moment, and blesses heaven that she is with me !

June 25,

“I was in hopes to have been able to have forwarded this to you before we left

the channel, imagining, if it continued calm, we might have some communication with the shore. But on the night I last wrote, a strong breeze brought us nearly out of channel, and the following morning our much loved native land had entirely receded from our view, and we were launched into the grand Atlantic, where I fear we shall be detained for a long period, for as yet we have not made one third of our way. The swell has been very great, and the motion for some days intolerable for my beloved, who has been dreadfully sick, but she never complains. To-day is delightful, scarcely a ripple on the water, and a brilliant sun to enliven our drooping spirits, but nothing to give us hopes of a short passage."

July 1.

"This day we have had the pleasure of seeing land, and are within twenty miles of it; but it appears to us much

nearer, and although we are come out of our course, it is gratifying to the eye which has so long been wandering over the boundless expanse, to rest on what, at this distance, looks merely like barren land.

“ It is the Island of Corvo, one of the Western Isles, about seven hundred miles from Newfoundland, and near thirteen from Halifax, so that we have still the prospect of being near a month at sea.

“ For the last week we have had calm, serene weather, the wind to the north-west, which has occasioned our being where we are.

“ To-day it is rough again, and the wind much more favourable..

“ Some days ago Major Patch came on board to see us ; he is in the ———

transport, which is so crouded that the men can scarcely stand on the deck. The quarter-master's wife and six children furnish the Major with additional cause of complaint: he is entertained by the *music* of the latter, morning, noon, and night, and even *his* voice, so sonorous, and often elevated, cannot be heard above this deafening and continued peal. The poor little creatures are weary to death of the confinement, and have nothing else to do but to torment each other.

“The Major gave us a most *circumstantial* account of his distressing situation; and this, together with a description of some *most extraordinary* fish that had been taken, and of a *phenomenon* he had discovered in the *clouds*, furnished him with an *incessant* conversation for about two hours, which he continued with us.

“The Major finds *wonders* wherever

he is, even when surrounded by nothing but sea and sky. He lamented his not being in the same ship with us; we by no means participated in his regrets. Editha declares her ears rung for an hour after he had left us.

“We have had the advantage of a lovely moon for some nights; and as I looked at it, I have thought of you all, wandering in our dear forest, and watching its beams silvering the ocean, which you sighed to think we were traversing.

July 12.

“Forty miles off the banks of Newfoundland. We see a ship for England, and I seal this in haste, in hopes of getting it on board. God bless you all.

“Your’s most affectionately,

“H. W. STANHOPE.”

P. S. Editha bids me say a thousand things for her to Virginia, and presents her love to you all."

The receipt of this letter proved extremely satisfactory to the Stanhopes, and they eagerly looked forward to the arrival of the next Halifax packet, which they trusted would bring them an assurance of their friend's having reached the termination of their voyage.

But ere they received this pleasing intelligence, Virginia was again preparing to leave home.

Mrs. Pelham had formed a sudden resolution to go to Harrowgate, and was anxiously solicitous she should accompany her; and Virginia could not think of refusing, as she knew her society was

the greatest pleasure Mrs. Pelham could enjoy ; and as there were very few things from which she derived any amusement, Virginia would not for worlds have deprived her of that.

She was conscious that this excursion would be any thing but pleasurable ; her friend's malady was chiefly on the nerves ; she had a thousand different caprices, and a restless irritation about her, that rendered it extremely irksome to be her constant companion. But in her happier days she had been the kind and steady friend of the Stanhopes ; and Virginia was pleased that she had an opportunity of evincing her gratitude, by shewing her every attention in her power under her present affliction, and rejoiced that she could do so without the possibility of her conduct being imputed to interested motives, as Mrs. Pelham had a nephew to whom she was much attached, and who she had nominated as her heir.

A mutual attachment existed between Harriet (Mr. Stanhope's eldest daughter) and a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, to whom she was shortly to be married; and under these circumstances she could not be expected to volunteer taking her sister's place, nor would Virginia have permitted her had she requested it.

CHAP. VI.



Far off to regions unexplored I fly,
To savage nations and a frozen sky,
Where the Laurentian stream his copious stores,
In whitening torrents to the Atlantic pours.

MIDDLETON HOWARD.

Prize Poem.

THE day before that Mrs. Pelham had appointed for commencing her journey, Virginia received a letter from Mrs. Henry Stanhope, which I shall here insert, before we enter upon new scenes, that will demand our exclusive attention.

July 28, Halifax.

“ My dearest friend,

“ Three days ago we had the pleasure of being at length emancipated from our floating prison. My dear Henry forwarded a letter to your parents sometime since by an American vessel; the method by which it was conveyed on board was somewhat extraordinary, at least to me, who am so young a sailor.

“ The two ships having drawn as near to each other as was practicable, the letter was fastened to a nail, and thrown on board the American, and I trust has ere this reached you. I was delighted with the appearance of this town from the harbour, which is beautiful in the extreme, and the hills covered with trees, which rise around it, render it extremely picturesque.

“ Our vessel had scarcely anchored when it was crouded with guests, who came to welcome our arrival, which has been expected some time.

“ We are still at an inn, there being great difficulty in procuring a house, in which we have not yet succeeded. The climate at present appears to me exactly similar to that of England at this time of the year; I understand the severe weather does not set in till Christmas.

“ Henry has been making enquiries respecting the price of provisions, which he tells me is nearly the same as in the mother country, with the exception of wine and spirits, which are considerably cheaper.

“ I shall not have an opportunity of sending this letter for some days, and shall therefore defer concluding it.

August 1.

“ We are at length settled in a small house, for which we are to pay sixty guineas a-year, unfurnished.

“ The woman I brought out with me is a most excellent creature, and serves me in the double capacity of housekeeper and waiting-maid ; I have another woman servant and Henry’s man, who is a soldier, and this is the whole of my *splendid* establishment, with which I am perfectly satisfied, and fancy myself better served, then when half a dozen of my father’s lacqueys were at my command.

“ I was given to understand on my arrival here, that a captain’s wife had no chance of being taken notice of by the chief inhabitants ; I therefore anticipated a mortification, which, perhaps, I am not yet wise enough to endure with per-

fect stoicism. However, my philosophy has not been put to the trial. I fancy they have discovered that I am *Lord Culisbrook's* daughter, for almost every body of any consequence has called upon me.

“ *Pic-nic* parties are much the fashion here; we had a numerous one a few days since. We went by water to the woods, and taking the band in the boat with us, we were rowed a few miles up the river, when we landed, and had our dinner spread on the grass. After which we adjourned to a farm, where we had tea, and danced till dusk in a barn.

“ I thought of you, Virginia, the whole day; and when the band played those airs we were wont to listen to together, and which sounded doubly sweet on the water, the tears sprang to my eyes, and I was afraid I should have been foolish.

“ Friday we had a ball at the governor’s house; it was like all other balls of this kind. I was not inclined to dance, and therefore joined a commerce table, and very near committed myself by falling asleep, the party being by no means animated.

“ We yesterday visited a place they call the Lodge; it was built by the Duke of Kent; it is a most romantic spot, and the drive to it very beautiful.

“ Nature here forms what in England we spend thousands to produce; there is nothing but labour wanting to make it a most charming country, but that is extremely difficult to be procured. There are no very high mountains immediately about this neighbourhood, yet it is all uneven ground, and gentle risings, and you cannot go a quarter of a mile on a level.

“ We are in anxious expectation of the packet from England, which doubtless will bring us letters from you. Almost the only objection I can at present find to this country, is the length of time we are deprived of communication with England—in the first place, as regards one’s individual feelings—and in the second the dearth of public news occasions the fabrication of ten thousand idle tales to supply this deficiency.

“ The packet from New York is come in, and the mail for England will be made up this evening.

“ I must now close this voluminous epistle, and with a thousand loves from Henry, to which I join my own to your dear group,

“ I am ever

“ Your’s,

“ EDITHA STANHOPE.”

The day after the receipt of this letter, Virginia set out with Mrs. Pelham for Harrowgate, where they arrived after a tedious and uninteresting journey. Mrs. Pelham persisted in taking up her abode at one of the boarding-houses, contrary to Virginia's advice, who was aware that a residence in such a place was by no means eligible for an invalid ; but Mrs. Pelham thought the society she should meet there would be of benefit to her spirits. But she had been there but a very few days when she found the noise and confusion insupportable, and with some difficulty they succeeded in getting private lodgings.

Mrs. Pelham took the waters, and was regularly attended by a physician, who would indeed have been a man of unparalleled abilities, had he been able to cure half the maladies which she fancied herself afflicted with. Independant of her imaginary complaints, which cer-

tainly were the worst, as they were beyond the reach of medicine, and consequently could not admit of cure, her constitution was in reality extremely impaired, though she could not be said to labour under any particular or confirmed disease ; but a general debility pervaded her whole frame, extending itself to her mind ; and perhaps she could not have been in a more pitiable situation, nor in one that excites less pity in the breast of the common observer, who, becoming wearied by a repetition of, apparently, causeless complaints, too generally ceases to compassionate the sufferers, against whom he feels a degree of irritation for the trouble and perplexity their caprices occasion those about them.

CHAP. VII.



For stript of health, benumbed thy vital flood,
Thy muscles lax'd, and decompos'd thy blood,
What is thy courage man? a foodless flame,
A light unseen, a soul without a frame!

COLUMBIAD. *Joel Barlow.*

MRS. PELHAM'S maid always slept in the room with her, and Virginia had a chamber to herself; there were other lodgers in the same house with them, and Virginia's rest was much disturbed

on the first night, by the almost incessant coughing of some one who occupied the apartment next to her's. It was a hollow deep cough, like that of a person in the last stage of a consumption; in the intervals of it she could distinguish a gentle soothing voice, and sometimes low sobs and accents of distress.

Virginia felt too strong a degree of sympathy for the sufferer to permit her to sleep; and when the coughing gradually ceased, and she concluded the invalid had fallen asleep, still the thoughts of what the feelings of his companion must be most painfully affected her, and she determined to make enquiries in the morning respecting the persons who had so much interested her. But this she had not an immediate opportunity of doing—and shortly after breakfast Mrs. Pelham's physician entered to pay his accustomed visit, when Virginia seized the moment

to indulge herself in a short walk across some fields at the back of the house.

She had proceeded but a few yards, when she perceived at a little distance before her, a gentleman leaning on the arm of a lady, as with debilitated steps he slowly pursued his way. He was suddenly seized with a fit of coughing, that convinced Virginia he was the same person who had before so strongly excited her compassion.

By the time they had reached the stile, on which they turned to seat themselves, Virginia was close behind them, when, to her utter amazement and dismay, she recognizes in these two interesting persons no other than Augusta and Clarence Villeroy.

She was so much shocked in discovering the latter in a person who appeared so seriously indisposed, that she could

not immediately speak, or reply to the kind expressions of pleasure with which they both greeted her ; but observing the tears swimming in Augusta's eyes, and that she was making a violent effort to conceal her emotion from her husband, Virginia recollected herself, and explained to them the occasion of her coming to Harrowgate, and enquired how long they had been there ; for she had directed her last letter to Augusta in Wales, supposing she still continued in the principality.

Clarence, who still spoke with the same energetic volubility with which he always delivered himself, though in a more hollow voice, and often checked by his cough, and a sudden shortness of breath, now said that he had caught a trifling cold while he was in Wales—that Augusta, being causelessly alarmed about it, persuaded him to try change of air—they had therefore quitted their Cam-

brian seclusion, and after spending a few days with the Temples on their way, they had come to Harrowgate, where they had been about a week.

“But I am quite well now,” continued Clarence, “nothing but this tiresome cough to complain of, but that I have always been subject to—I want to go to the ball to-night, but I cannot persuade Augusta to accompany me.”

Virginia forced a smile, but could not reply, for she felt quite overcome, as she contemplated the hectic tinge on his hollow cheek, the large projecting orb, and emaciated bending form.

Clarence Villeroy had always been remarkable for his personal attractions, and perhaps he was not less handsome now than he had been at any former period of his life; but it was that kind of beauty that cannot be looked on with-

out a sigh of anguish, for it was such as denoted speedy decay—it was like the last pale tint of the rose ere its leaves fall, and it perishes for ever !

But not like that rose which blooms and flourishes its stated period, and in its natural course declines, was Clarence Villeroy. He more resembled the infected flower that harbours in its leaves the hidden worm, or noxious insect, that feeds on it to its destruction.

The vehemence of his passions, and that restless anxiety of temper, never to be satisfied, had destroyed his peace, and his constitution, and threatened the premature termination of his existence.

In their retirement, Augusta had vainly endeavoured to be every thing that he could wish her to be ; and though in reality she was so, his ingenuity still discovered something to complain of ; and af-

ter the two or three first days, during which he professed himself to be perfectly happy, he began to reproach her with not feeling an equal degree of felicity, and of harbouring a secret wish to be with her mother.

About that time his cough attacked him, but he had been subject to it when a boy, being naturally of a consumptive habit, as the flush on his cheek, and inclination of his form denoted.

He observed that Augusta appeared uneasy when he coughed, though it was then but trifling, and he purposely remained out of doors in the damp of the evening in order to encrease it, and thereby augment her interest for him.

This had the desired effect in both instances—the cough became alarming, Augusta miserable, and Clarence happier than he had ever before been, for

scarcely could his wife withdraw her eyes from him, or leave him for a moment, for she entertained the most serious apprehensions for his safety. While he, with that insensibility to his own danger, which characterizes the disorder by which he was affected, believed the fears he was sure she entertained to be entirely groundless, and delighted in ascribing them to her affection for him, and frequently derived great satisfaction in witnessing the unhappiness she experienced, when he purposely expatiated upon the different persons in his family who had died of consumptions.

It was not till Augusta perceived that the malady daily gained upon him, that she ventured to propose quitting Wales, in order to try the effect of change of air, so apprehensive was she that he would impute her desire to remove to selfish motives.

At length with much judicious manœuvring she got him to consent to go to Harrowgate; and because she did not propose it, but appeared anxious that he should be where the best medical advice could be procured, he determined on spending a few days with her mother in their way there. Hillbury was not more than twenty-five miles from Harrowgate, and nothing at this time could have been a greater comfort to Augusta than the society of her mother, who she knew, as well as Mr. Temple, would gladly have accompanied them to that place; but she dared not propose it, resolving to avoid every thing which could in the slightest degree irritate the susceptible feelings of her husband.

With unfeigned sorrow she contemplated his fading form and daily increasing weakness, for though he was not the husband of her choice, (at least not the being her heart would have selected),

he was still her husband, and though he made her miserable she could not bear the thought of losing him for ever. To be parted from him by inexorable death! to see her once blooming Clarence sink into an untimely grave, even in the very prime of manhood, oh! the idea was dreadful! Rather would she have continued his slave for ever, and have worn out life in a blind subserviency to all his caprices.

CHAP. VIII.



Like powerful armies, trenching at a town,
By slow, and silent, but resistless sap,
In his pale progress gently gaining ground,
Death urged his deadly reign, in spite of art,
Of all the balmy blessings nature lends
To succour frail humanity !

YOUNG.

THE accidental rencontre with Virginia was a source of extreme comfort to Augusta—and, at her first interview with

Mrs. Pelham, it was arranged that they should all live together as one family.

To any who could so far have forgotten his humanity, as to have laughed at the infirmities of human nature, the contrast in the characters of Mrs. Pelham and Clarence Villeroy, and the variety and oddity of their caprices, might have proved entertaining.

While she was in reality free from any confirmed disorder, yet every day fancying himself attacked by some new and fatal disease, which must doubtless terminate her existence, trying every receipt, and consulting every physician, Clarence Villeroy, who was actually labouring under a desperate malady, persuaded himself he was hourly getting better, and believed he should soon be quite well, while he laughed at the doctor's prescriptions, and scarcely could be persuaded to comply with them.

But the moralizer, softened by sensibility, would have mourned over the weakness of his fellow-creatures, and have lamented that imbecility which was no less apparent in the exaggerated terrors of the one, than in the flattering self-delusion of the other.

Deep was the sigh that heaved the breast of Virginia, as she gazed on the countenance of Clarence, and traced in it the resemblance to his beloved brother.

She had never thought the likeness so very strong when she had beheld them together, yet now she never looked at Clarence without being struck with some turn in his features that reminded her of his brother. It would be improper to say his image was recalled to her mind, as that was impossible, for it never had been absent.

She believed Clarence to be in a rapid consumption; but she hinted not her apprehensions to Augusta, nor was it necessary, for she, with unspeakable sorrow, admitted a similar conviction.

Not content with the physicians who attended him, and whose blank countenances, when she expressed her fears, absolutely petrified her, she privately consulted, by letter, every other medical man of any eminence in the neighbourhood; and they advised, that, as Mr. Villeroy's illness had so rapidly increased since he had been at Harrowgate, it would be expedient he should make a trial of some other situation; a sea voyage would probably be more effectual than any thing else.

Augusta requested the physician, who attended Clarence, to mention this to him, which he accordingly did.

Clarence protested that there was not the least occasion for having recourse to a remedy so disagreeable to him, on account of the inconvenience his wife must be subject to—besides which, he hated the sea, and was always dreadfully sick on the water, and he was sure that would be the surest way of killing him at once. No; he should continue in Yorkshire till after Christmas, by which time he doubted not he should be quite well. He should then go to town for a few months, and perhaps the ensuing summer, if the peace continued, he might take a trip to the Continent.

A cold chill spread through Augusta's frame, as she listened to the hollow voice in which these words were uttered, and the frequent cough that interrupted them.

“ I know Augusta,” he continued,

“you are tired of roving, and I begin to think I am not much the better for it; so I am resolved to go home. I don’t mean to your mother’s house; but I have been thinking I should like to have that cottage she and you occupied before she married Mr. Temple. I beg you will write to her to-day, and request she will order it to be prepared for our accommodation. I have taken a great fancy to it—we can live just as we like there—we need not see more company than we choose—and I shall amuse myself making alterations and improvements in it.”

Augusta had of late spoken so little of her mother, and appeared so completely engrossed, and wrapt up in her interest for him, that Clarence thought he might venture to reside in Mrs. Temple’s neighbourhood.

He was weary of living under the same roof with Mrs. Pelham, and he did not

much like his wife's intimacy with Virginia, from whom he wished to separate her, and this induced him to form the sudden resolution of taking up his residence at the cottage, which he knew Mrs. Temple still retained in her possession.

This proposition was extremely agreeable to Augusta; she had a very high opinion of the physician who resided in the vicinity of Hillbury; and with as much satisfaction as she could experience under her present circumstances, she wrote to her mother to inform her of Clarence's intention.

Augusta was aware that she should not entirely lose the society of her friend Virginia; for Mrs. Temple, on hearing that Mrs. Pelham was at Harrowgate, had invited her to spend some time at her house, to which Mrs. Pelham had consented, even before she knew that the

Villeroys were about to leave Harrowgate—but of this Clarence was ignorant.

Mrs. Pelham had within a few days taken it into her head that she felt symptoms of the disorder that afflicted Clarence Villeroys, and she privately informed Virginia, that she was resolved not to continue any longer under the same roof with him, for that she was convinced his malady was epidemic, and she even believed herself already infected by it. Change of air might, perhaps, be of service to her, and she was resolved to set off immediately for Hillbury.

Having once conceived this persuasion, it was with the greatest difficulty Virginia could prevail upon her to remain one night more at their lodgings. However, she at length consented to stay till the next morning, as it would have been extremely inconvenient to have set off on

that day, and without letting Mrs. Temple know when she was to expect them.

But Mrs. Pelham confined herself to her chamber, protesting to Virginia, that no consideration should induce her again to breathe the same atmosphere with Clarence Villeroy.

CHAP. IX.



Oh! deep enchantment! prelude to repose,
The dawn of bliss, the twilight of our woes!
Yet half I hear the parting spirit sigh,
It is a dread, an awful thing to die!
Mysterious worlds, untravell'd by the sun!
Where Time's far wand'ring tide has never run!
From your unfathomed shades, and viewless spheres,
A warning comes, unheard by other ears.
'Tis Heav'n's commanding trumpet, long and loud,
Like Sinia's thunder, pealing from the cloud!
While nature hears, with terror mingled trust,
The shock that hurls her fabric to the dust;
And like the trembling Hebrew when he trod
The roaring waves and call'd upon his God,
With mortal terrors clouds immortal bliss,
And shrieks, and hovers o'er the dark abyss!

CAMPBELL.

THE ensuing day beheld Mrs. Pelham
and Virginia domesticated in the family

of Mrs. Temple, and a few days after Clarence and Augusta took possession of the cottage, which was about a mile from Hillbury.

Even in this short period Clarence was visibly altered, he had been much fatigued with only coming twenty-five miles in an easy carriage, and could not now walk round a rural garden in front of the cottage without feeling excessively tired. For several weeks he had expectorated blood, and was often so violently affected by a pain in his side, as to be contracted nearly double. Yet his spirits seldom failed him, and when he talked of death, it seemed more to excite Augusta's emotion, than from any apprehensions he entertained of real danger.

The physician who now attended him, prescribed what is usual in such cases, but with very slight hopes of its efficacy: the same gentleman was constant in his

visits to Mrs. Pelham, who considered his attendance absolutely necessary.

She seemed much pleased with her present residence, and had taken a great fancy to Mrs. Temple, who supplied Virginia's place while she was engaged with her friend Augusta, with whom she spent part of every day, disregarding the inattention and sometimes actual rudeness of Clarence, which she imputed to the irritation of sickness, and which she would not notice while her society could be any alleviation to the unhappiness of her friend.

For Clarence too she felt a double interest, independent of his affecting situation; for he was the brother of that being, who above all others she would have delighted to oblige, and for his sake she was most happy to perform any little office of kindness or attention for Clarence, but she never could please him.

No one but Augusta could do any thing to his satisfaction; and, not even her mother was allowed to share her fatigues, and Mrs. Temple was prevented from remaining with her daughter, for more than a very short time each day, by the evident uneasiness her presence always occasioned Clarence. The same cause kept Augusta's old friend, Mrs. Cotterel, away from her.

They had been about a week at the cottage, when the cough suddenly left Clarence, the pain in his side totally subsided, and he appeared to have nothing to complain of but a general debility.

The most sanguine hope took possession of Augusta's breast; her friends participated in her feelings; and joy again seemed to dawn on the long gloomy prospect.

Augusta was not the less pleased to observe that Clarence had now lost that unnatural insensibility to his own danger, and that he now believed himself to be in a most precarious state. This she considered as a proof that he was better, for it has often been observed, that the spirits of an invalid are more affected during convalescence, than at the period that his life is actually at the greatest hazard.

The next day Clarence appeared still better, he eat tolerably, and walked round the garden with the assistance only of Augusta's arm.

As great a change seemed to have taken place in his disposition, as in his health: never since she had known him had Augusta beheld him in such an amiable temper of mind. He was mournful, but composed, and his demeanor much more natural to his situ-

ation than it had before been. As they were walking round the garden Augusta observed—

“If you continue to amend thus rapidly, my dear Clarence, you will be able to take an airing in the carriage as far as Hillbury in a day or two.”

“No, my love, that will not be the first place I shall go to!”

“Where then?”

“To yonder mansion, you see rising among the trees!” said Clarence pointing to the village church.

“Indeed, my Clarence,” returned Augusta affecting to misunderstand him, “you will have great reason to repair there, to give thanks for your wonderful recovery.”

Clarence only faintly smiled in reply to this; he shortly after said—

“ You have no great reason to wish for my recovery, Augusta; I have made you very miserable for the short time I have been with you, but I know you forgive me. I have used your mother very ill too; when she comes to-day ask her to stay and dine, and keep Virginia all night: you must not be alone.”

“ I shall not be *alone*, my love! *your* society is all that I wish for; and, to see you so much better makes me happier than I can express.”

Clarence sighed, and pointing to a young rose tree, he said—

“ That is the slip off your rose tree, Augusta, that I planted the first day I came to see the cottage. I remember

I had been tormenting you the whole morning; and, as I put it in the earth your tears fell upon it—It was a kindly shower—see how it flourishes!—the same shower will shortly fall on other dust; and, may the spirit it hallows rise to perfection there (pointing to the skies) as this rose tree has here! but *this* shall only flourish for a few years! Augusta, do not forget that I planted it! O! since I have been ill, I have been exquisitely happy! for I have been convinced that you loved me!—such rapture is worth dying for!——”

The tears streamed from Augusta's eyes, for tho' she confidently believed him to be considerably better, it was impossible to hear such language unmoved.

After remaining a short time silent, Clarence pronounced in a plaintive tone, —“ My brother!—my dear brother!—

I loved him very much. I wish—but 'tis impossible!—my father might—but no, it is my own fault: I told him I was in no danger. Editha, your tears will stream!—but my brother, my dear brother will feel most. Poor Clifford will be sorry—yet no,—if he loved——”

He suddenly stopped, and clasped Augusta's arm with eager wildness. He gazed on her face, it was pale as death: a universal shuddering seized her.

The name of Clifford pronounced by her husband at this moment, when he seemed more a being of another world than of this, darted an undefinable, but agonizing pang thro' her heart. She drew him towards a rustic bench, and as they seated themselves, he exclaimed with violent agitation and gasping for breath—

“O there is madness in the thought!

promise me, Augusta, that no human being shall ever——O what am I about? Wretch! ungrateful wretch that I am! O still am I all mortality!—Be happy dearest! happier than I have made you.”

His violence suddenly ceased, and he wept bitterly.

Augusta was incapable of uttering a single syllable, and they shortly after returned to the house in silence; when Clarence reposed himself on a sofa, and holding Augusta's hand, he fell asleep.

CHAP. X.



The strife is o'er!—the pangs of Nature close,
And life's last rapture triumphs o'er her woes!
Hark! as the spirit eyes with eagle gaze,
The noon of Heav'n undazzled by the blaze,
On Heav'nly winds that waft her to the sky,
Float the sweet tones of star-born melody;
Wild as that hallowed anthem sent to hail
Bethlehem's shepherds in the lonely vale,
When Jordan hush'd his waves, and midnight still,
Watch'd on the holy tow'rs of Zion Hill.

CAMPBELL.

MRS. TEMPLE did not appear at the cottage during the morning, but sent

word by Virginia, that she would repair there in the course of the evening.— Virginia at her friends request, remained to spend the day with her.

After dinner Clarence's spirits revived again, and he seemed to have forgotten the deep melancholy that had oppressed him in the morning.

He expressed a wish to see Augusta and Virginia play a game of chess: the board was brought. Augusta bade Virginia place the men, while her husband's head reposed on her bosom, and one pale hand hung over her shoulder. For a moment Augusta did not observe that Virginia was not placing the Chess men, when looking up she perceived her eyes fixed in horror on the countenance of Clarence! at the same instant Augusta felt her burthen sink heavy upon her, and the encircling arm fell unresisting a dead weight upon the sofa. A piercing

and reiterated shriek burst from her, as she clasped the lifeless form in wildest agony to her breast. But no longer did it return her fervent pressure! Again she shrieked, and cried for help to save her Clarence! But he was gone for ever! The senseless clay was unconscious of her agonized grasp, while the beatified spirit, rejoicing in its emancipation from its earthly prison, flew enraptured to its native Heaven!

Glad strains of glory welcome to the skies
The soul still trembling at its blissful rise!!!



The mortal career of Clarence Villeroy, tho' brief and free from the attacks of adversity, and disappointment, was yet marked by turbulence, agitation, and anxiety; solely the offspring of his own

unhappy disposition, which alike deprived himself and all connected with him of peace, and ultimately occasioned his premature dissolution !

He had trodden the path of dissipation with that persevering eagerness which naturally generates speedy satiety ; yet joyless, and disgusted, he had continued to pursue it, merely from force of habit, and reluctance to arouse his faculties to any serious exertion.

At a moment when his mind was languishing for an object to excite its interest, he beheld Augusta. All those dormant feelings that had so long been slumbering in lethargic apathy, were at once awakened, and stimulated by his constitutional eagerness, all rallied to one point. Augusta became his idol ! the very soul of his existence ! But that want of moderation which had characterized all his pursuits, and had actuated him to ex-

haust every source of enjoyment, annihilated the happiness he had promised himself in the connubial state; and the most unqualified proofs of her regard could not satisfy his importunate demands upon his wife's affection, and it might literally have been said, that he died for love of her.

Clarence was unacquainted with the wisdom of forbearance, and the lessons of experience had failed to convince him, that the most delightful enjoyments, if unchecked by judicious moderation, must speedily cease to excite those animated sensations which convey so strong a charm, even in the most vigorous imagination.

As if worn out by the fatigue of incessant restlessness, his spirit suddenly became calm, and the few last hours of his life, were as peaceable and serene, as its progress had been the reverse. The

wearied soul, gently glided into eternity, the friendly shade of death, instantaneously obscured all his mortal errors; and he was mourned by his afflicted wife, as a faultless being, for as such, she at this awful moment considered him.

CHAP. XI.



Dark and deep, the moon like a dim shield, is swimming thro' its folds. With this cloathe the spirits of old their sudden gestures on the wind when they stride from blast to blast, along the dusky night, often blended with the gale, to some warrior's grave, they roll the mist a gray dwelling to his ghost until the song arise——
——— But the form returned again, it returned with bending eyes, and dark winding locks of mist!

OSSIAN.

THE scene immediately succeeding the melancholy catastrophe, may be easi-

ly imagined, and I gladly pass over a particular description of the mournful period. The entrance of her mother, just as Augusta was in the wildest agonies of her new born grief, was unheeded by her at such a moment, and she was insensible to her tender embraces and streaming tears.

The physician who had been sent for, upon a slender hope that the spark of life was not for ever extinct, was by no means surprized to find that his patient no longer survived, for he had fully expected that the last awful change would take place on this day; being aware that the semblance of a sudden amendment was entirely deceptive, and incidental to the disease, and generally a forerunner of approaching dissolution.

Virginia with extreme reluctance quitted her friend, leaving her to the care of her mother; being compelled to return

to Hillbury on account of Mrs. Pelham, whose spirits she knew would be more than usually depressed on receiving the sad intelligence of poor Clarence's demise.

The distance across the fields was something less than a mile; Virginia was in the constant habit of traversing it alone, but as it was now quite dusk, (being about seven o'clock the latter end of September) she would have requested one of the servants to have attended her, but at a moment like this they were all engaged, and every one too much affected to think of her, and she determined to proceed alone.

The clouds were heavy, and the wind blew in melancholy gusts round the house of mourning! Virginia shuddered as she turned to cast a pitying glance upon it, then sighing deeply, she traversed the little garden that surrounded the cottage.

The early falling leaf, apt emblem of the lately departed, was whirled across her path by the moaning blast, and she almost fancied she could descry the bending form of poor Clarence slowly emerging from the shrubbery. His pallid, partially convulsed countenance, as she had beheld it at the moment of dissolution, was so vividly impressed upon her mind, as to engender in it a fearful horror, which, had she not been ashamed of the weakness, would have induced her to return to the cottage, and seek a companion in her lonely walk. But she had been ever taught to subdue the feelings she could not justify; and tho' the sensation she now experienced was a new one, she was conscious that it owed its origin to the imbecility of human nature, which could not contemplate its destruction unappalled.

With a palpitating heart she proceeded onward, scarcely venturing to cast a

glance around her ; a pale sickly moon shone for a moment from time to time between the dark flitting clouds, presenting imperfect objects, and the whole scene so encreased the influence of the image which now occupied her whole mind, and impregnated it with so awful a sensation, that, upon looking up, and perceiving the figure of a man slowly approaching, she trembled so violently as scarcely to be able to proceed. To pass him was unavoidable, unless she had turned back, for there was but one path, and that a narrow one—but a stile still intervened between them.

The figure, which was clad in dark attire, advanced with a slow and solemn step, with the head bent to earth.

On reaching the stile he stood still a few moments, and then seated himself upon it, and leaning against a tree, which supported one side, he cast his

eyes up to heaven, and seemed lost in the grand contemplation, while the pale moon beam rested on his dejected features, and chrystalized the tear that trembled in his eye.

Virginia was within a few paces, but she could not advance, she was rooted to the spot. A cold damp bedewed her frame, and it was with the utmost difficulty she supported herself.

Was it the influence of her own imagination that gave the features and aspect of the dead Clarence Villeroy, to the being she now gazed upon? or was his disembodied spirit permitted to wander in the haunts once dear to him, and shed the tear of sympathy for those who mourned his loss, still doomed to toil in this world of cares?

Virginia continued to gaze till she became in a measure re-assured and fancied

herself endowed with a supernatural firmness, as she ventured to advance a few steps. But her senses suddenly became confused—she was unable to think or understand—she staggered, but fell not, for she felt herself supported in trembling arms, while a voice, which might still have led her to believe Clarence Villeroy beside her, pronounced—

“ Virginia! my poor brother!—I am come too late !”

A shower of tears relieved the full heart of Virginia, who was completely overcome by contending emotions.

She would have been angry with herself, had she supposed it possible she could have admitted a sensation of pleasure at this moment ; yet a soothing balm seemed suddenly poured upon her aching heart, and the tears that she shed were more like the genial summer shower that

revives and invigorates nature, than the wild rush of the winter torrent that brings destruction in its violence.

By the letters Colonel Villeroy had received from his brother, he had not been led to conclude him in the slightest danger, though somewhat indisposed; but within a few days one from Augusta had reached him. It was couched in the most affecting terms, describing the rapid progress of her husband's disorder, and her strong apprehensions of his danger.

This Augusta had written unknown to Clarence, thinking it her duty to inform his brother of his real situation.

She had dispatched one to the same purport to Lord Calisbrook; but he, concluding the fears of a wife to be exaggerated, had not immediately heeded

it, though intending, if Clarence did not get better soon, to pay him a visit.

The letter to Colonel Villeroy had been detained sometime on the road ; but the moment he received it, he prepared with all possible expedition for his departure, and left L—— two hours after.

But he forbore to acquaint Clifford with the cause of his sudden resolution, merely saying, that an occasion of great moment required his immediate presence—that it was most probable he should shortly rejoin him—in the mean time he should hear from him.

Colonel Villeroy felt it impossible at that moment to impart to Clifford the dangerous state of his brother ; for he felt convinced that Charles could not participate in the acuteness of his feelings ; for, however principle and huma-

nity would forbid him to rejoice, it was not natural that he should sincerely deplore the probability of an event, which would permit him without criminality to indulge an affection for a woman he had long tenderly loved, and who would then be freed from the sacred tie which now formed an insuperable bar between them.

Colonel Villeroy could not bear to engender a hope in the breast of Charles, which must be entirely founded on the untimely death of his beloved brother, and Charles concluded that some domestic concern, probably of a pecuniary nature, occasioned the precipitate departure of his friend.

Augusta had written to the Colonel from Harrowgate, and he, being ignorant if they were returned from thence, had repaired to Hillbury to enquire for them.

The chaise which conveyed him stopped before the house, almost at the same moment that a messenger arrived from the cottage to acquaint Mr. Temple with the melancholy event that had just taken place.

This immediately reached the ears of the afflicted brother, who, when he had recovered the first gust of anguish, followed the path, he was informed led the nearest way to the cottage, being anxious to mingle his tears with those of his widowed sister, and contemplate for the last time ere they should be for ever hid from his view, the features, beautiful even in death, of a tenderly beloved and only brother.

Villeroy was aware that Virginia had been to Harrowgate, Clarence having mentioned it in one of his letters—and Mr. Temple told him that Virginia and Mrs. Temple were with Augusta. Thus

he was in some measure prepared to meet her.

The effort she had made to save herself, when she found that she was falling, aroused him from his sublime meditations, and with a throbbing heart he received her in his arms.

Such a meeting under such circumstances could be productive of little else than mutual agitation, which each vainly endeavoured to conceal, and found an excuse for it in their sorrow for the heavy calamity they both so sincerely deplored, the conviction of which soon resumed absolute dominion in the brother's mind, and shut out every sensation but that of the deepest grief.

But Virginia's thoughts did not so speedily relapse into the melancholy channel from which they had been attracted by the sudden and unexpected

appearance of Colonel Villeroy. A spring of consolation seemed opened in her breast, effacing by its balsamic influence, the gloomy horror, which but a few minutes before had coloured with the hue of despair every object she beheld.

Colonel Villeroy would not permit her to proceed alone, but maintaining that sad and mournful silence, which is the eloquence of genuine sorrow, he accompanied her to the steps of Mr. Temple's mansion, and fervently grasping her hand, he quitted her, and again took the path to the cottage.

CHAP. XII.



It grieves me most that parting thus,
All my soul feels I dare not speak;
And when I turn me from thy sight,
The tears in silence wet my cheek.

BOWLES.

BEING apprehensive of wearying the reader by dwelling too long upon the melancholy theme which has for some time engrossed our attention, I shall pass over some days, in the course of

which the remains of "what once was Clarence Villeroy," attended by his father and brother, were conveyed to the family vault, and deposited with his ancestors.

Lord Calisbrook, on being apprized by express of the death of his favourite son, had set off for Yorkshire, in greater affliction than he had ever before experienced, and arrived there in time to follow his manes to their last home.

The burial place of his family was adjoining to an estate his Lordship possessed in the bishopric of Durham.

He had been much surprised at meeting his now only son, and had greeted him with more affection than he had been wont to display towards him.

But Clarence, perhaps owing to a similarity of disposition in some respects,

had always been his favourite child ; and the loss of him taught his father the nature of real misery, which he was probably before unacquainted with, being impenetrable to the casual attacks of solicitude, anxiety, and apprehension, or what by others might have been esteemed adversity.

Mrs. Villeroy removed from the cottage to her mother's house, where the utmost efforts of friendship and maternal tenderness were exerted to soothe her wounded spirit.

Colonel Villeroy had promised to return and spend some days at Hillbury before he again quitted the kingdom, to rejoin his friend Clifford, a step he was resolved on, for he felt that Virginia was dearer to him than ever ; though he scarcely could be said to have had any intercourse with her during the few days he had been in Yorkshire, (as the cir-

cumstances under which they had met sealed their lips on all subjects but that of their recent loss), yet Villeroy had beheld her, and that was enough.

He had witnessed too the lively sympathy she felt for "others woes," and this in itself was all sufficient to retain him her captive.

Upon reflection also, the extreme agitation she had betrayed on meeting him, recurred forcibly to his mind; it was natural that she should have been much affected, feeling as she did for his loss, but such violent emotion might possibly owe its origin to the existence of a sentiment he ought to regret, however incapable he was of doing so in his heart.

Under his circumstances it would have been madness to have married Virginia, even would she have consented to have shared his broken fortunes, for it was

only by practising the strictest economy that he was enabled to support himself with credit and respectability.

How then could he have maintained a wife, and perhaps a family? No, his own tranquillity, and still more the peace of Virginia, which it was possible might be affected, required that he should absent himself from her society; yet a few days he could not refuse to the solicitations of an afflicted sister, and at Augusta's entreaty he promised to return, ere he again became an exile from his country.

He accompanied his father back to town, resolving not to leave him while his society appeared to give him satisfaction, or while consolation was necessary.

But brief was the period of Lord Callisbrook's affliction; he had been in Lon-

don but a short time when he resumed his old habits and method of spending his time; and Villeroy soon found that he might take his *conge* without any apprehensions of his father's being affected by the loss of his company—he therefore no longer delayed setting off for Yorkshire.

The man servant he had left sick behind him on going abroad was now recovered; but Villeroy found an excuse for still permitting him to form one of Lord Calisbrook's household, not choosing to incur the additional expence he would have occasioned him in travelling. He himself left London for Yorkshire in the mail coach.

CHAP. XIII.

In Helen's presence now, constrained and strange,
With painful caution chafing from my lips
The ready thought, half quivered into utterance,
For cold corrected words, expressive only
Of culprit consciousness I sit, nor ev'n
May look upon her face, but as a thing
On which I may not look; so painful now
The mingled feeling is since dark despair,
With one faint ray of hope hath tempered been.
I can no more endure it. She herself
Perceives it, and it pains her.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE arrival of Colonel Villeroy was an occasion of rejoicing to each individual of the party at Hillbury.

Mrs. Pelham still continued there, though she talked of repairing to the milder atmosphere of Devonshire, to pass the winter.

Through the united entreaties of Mrs. Temple and Augusta she had hitherto been induced to defer leaving them, at which I need scarcely say Virginia greatly rejoiced.

Augusta could not bear the thoughts of a separation from Virginia, for whom she had conceived the strongest friendship; and just at this period she felt her society most essential to her.

Besides the dejection of mind Augusta naturally laboured under, her health was much affected by the fatigue and anxiety she had undergone during her attendance on her husband, and mind and body were alike indisposed.

She had been about a month a widow (it was not quite five since she had become a wife), when Villeroy revisited Hillbury.

Notwithstanding the superiority of his understanding, and his strong judgment, Villeroy found it impossible to maintain a regular consistency in his manner towards Virginia; it either betrayed the most affectionate solicitude, or was marked by an unnatural constraint, or overacted indifference, and frequently displayed a rapid transition from softness bordering on tenderness, to coldness approaching to neglect.

He was under the dominion of a passion, whose province it is to subjugate reason, and which invariably subverts its influence in a greater or lesser degree even in the strongest minds.

Villeroy felt fully sensible of this, on which account he wished to avoid the society of Virginia, being conscious that in her presence he could not maintain the demeanor which prudence and propriety demanded.

While Virginia, ignorant of any just cause for the fluctuations in his behaviour, was alternately elevated and depressed, according as he betrayed an extraordinary regard for her, or chilled her by a semblance of indifference.

But though such was the effect his conduct really had on her, she took the greatest pains to conceal the strong influence he possessed over her happiness ; and with reluctance did she make this confession even to herself.

Often she felt angry with him, and resolved to treat him with distant re-

serve, and with a sigh she reverted to the time they had passed together at Brighton, when mutual confidence and geniality seemed the cement of their friendship; then again she would impute any sudden alteration in his manner to the dejection of his mind, and feel apprehensive that some unintentional slight on her part had given him offence.

This idea always excited in her an assiduity to please, which he never could resist, and both were alternately happy and miserable; for the indulgent smile of affection, brightening the features of Virginia, ever dispelled the cloud of care from the brow of Villeroy, and he would forget that he ought to wish her to frown.

A week passed in this manner, and every day Villeroy became more reluctant to depart, and still more convinced

of the necessity of his departure—at length he informed his friends he must leave them the next day but one.

A universal dejection followed this communication, nor could Villeroy himself make a single effort to disperse the gloom thrown over the whole party.

Virginia vainly endeavoured to appear as usual, and felt her spirits so completely oppressed, as scarcely to be able to speak without shedding tears.

Mrs. Pelham too was more than usually fanciful on this day—and she declared to Villeroy, that she was convinced she should never see him again, for she felt an inward and fatal disease preying upon her vitals, which she was confident must shortly put a period to her existence.

Deriving no comfort from each other's

society in the present temper of mind they early retired to rest.

Virginia had steeped more than one handkerchief in her tears, and ineffectually endeavoured to lose in sleep the cruel certainty that Villeroy was again to be separated from her, perhaps for years, when she was alarmed by the sudden opening of her chamber door.

Mrs. Pelham's maid abruptly entered, bearing a light in her hand.

“Dear ma'am, I am sure I beg your pardon, I hope I have not frightened you,” said the woman as she approached the bed, “but my mistress is so impatient, ma'am; she would insist on my coming and calling you up, here at three o'clock in the morning; and she begs, ma'am, you will please to come to her directly.”

“Is she worse then?” asked Virginia, as she hastily put some cloaths on.

“No, ma’am, I don’t think she is worse than usual, but she said she had something very particular to say to you about setting off directly—I am sure I don’t know where we are to go to next, ma’am, but mistress said we should not have time to prepare if we did not begin directly. She awoke me about five minutes ago, ma’am, and said all of a sudden, I am resolved to go—nothing else can save me—Lucy, call Miss Stanhope instantly.”

On entering Mrs. Pelham’s chamber, Virginia found her up—she was dressing herself with all the expedition she was capable of, and the moment Lucy reappeared she said to her—

“Now, Lucy, go and knock at Colonel Villeroy’s door, and tell him I shall

be glad to speak to him in the parlour below as soon as possible."

"Colonel Villeroy!" exclaimed Virginia, in amazement, and giving Lucy a look to detain her,

"Dear madam, may I ask what cause of such extraordinary moment requires _____."

"My dear," said Mrs. Pelham, interrupting her, "I have not been asleep to-night—I have formed my resolution, so it is of no use speaking to me—I am determined to accompany Colonel Villeroy to the Continent; at least I shall request him to be our escort. I shall repair immediately to the south of France, there, perhaps, I may be able to hold out another winter, but I am confident if I remain in England I shall not survive a month. You know the phy-

sicians prescribed a mild climate for poor Clarence Villeroy, and as my disorder in many respects resembles his, it no doubt will be of benefit to me. You, Virginia, I am sure will not refuse to accompany me; and your friends cannot expect you to quit me while I am in such a wretched state."

Virginia's heart bounded with the delight of new born hope: the first idea that presented itself was "Then I shall not be separated from Villeroy; at least, for some time."

But the absurdity of acting with such precipitation as Mrs. Pelham seemed resolved upon, called for her immediate interference, and affectionately taking her hand, she said—

"On me you know you may depend, I will never leave you while you require my society or attendance; but will it not

be better to defer acquainting Colonel Villeroy with your intention till the morning. He might perhaps think it extraordinary if we were to disturb him in the middle of the night, as there is, in fact, no absolute necessity for such precipitation, and no doubt he will protract his departure for a few days to suit your convenience. Besides, you know, my dear Mrs. Pelham, *I* could not go without consulting my parents, tho' I know they will not refuse their consent to my accompanying you."

With arguments of this nature Virginia convinced Mrs. Pelham that she could not conveniently set out on the day Colonel Villeroy had appointed for his departure, but which doubtless he would defer at her request; there could therefore, be no necessity for disturbing him, and alarming the whole house at this unseasonable hour.

A little more rhetoric, prevailed on Mrs. Pelham to return to her bed, where, being completely weary, she soon fell asleep.

Virginia escaped to her chamber ; very different were her feelings to what they had been when she had before entered it. Was she then destined to be the companion of Villeroy, on his journey ? but then she must leave Augusta ; and, many months might elapse ere she again beheld her parents and her sister. The two last considerations were a heavy drawback to her satisfaction. But she had long ardently desired to visit the continent, and her father had often lamented his inability to gratify her : could she have a better opportunity than the present ? and a more *agreeable* one, she conceived impossible.

But Augusta, poor Augusta ! she would feel so sensibly the loss of her

society just at this time, when her mind was still smarting from the effects of its recent wound, and her constitution sympathizing but too acutely in her mental sufferings.

A most charming thought suddenly struck her ! could she but prevail on Augusta to join their party, the excursion might be of infinite benefit to her health and spirits, and how greatly would her society increase their pleasure and satisfaction.

Delighted with this idea, Virginia resolved to exert her utmost influence to accomplish her wish, and to begin her plan of operation by securing Mrs. Temple as her advocate, by representing to her how beneficial change of air, and scene were likely to prove to Augusta in her present state of dejection ; and, she determined herself to make large demands on Augusta's friendship for her, and she

believed she would not be able to resist her persuasions, when she should represent to her in glowing colors, what might be her situation should Mrs. Pelham's illness terminate fatally, in a foreign land, and away from all her friends.

Virginia amused herself with the anticipation of this scheme till the usual hour of rising, and she was the first that entered the breakfast room.

CHAP. XIV.



Tho' on this subject still you have repress'd
All communing, yet, nevertheless, I well
Have mark'd your noble striving and revered
Your silent inward warfare, bravely held;
In this most pressing combat firm and valiant.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

VIRGINIA was soon joined by Augusta, to whom she immediately imparted Mrs. Pelham's hasty resolve. Augusta expressed the liveliest regret at the prospect of losing her friend's society, and

said with a look of reproach " I did not think Virginia, you would have displayed so little concern at the thoughts of leaving me."

Now was the time for Virginia to commence her attack, which she did in a most masterly stile, exciting the susceptible feelings of her auditor, and preferring every request as the demand of friendship.

Augusta was at first startled by the proposition, and seemed inclined wholly to reject it, but Virginia would scarcely permit her to utter a dissenting word.

They were arguing the point with much warmth, when Colonel Villeroy entered the room.

Virginia was instantly dumb ; she felt an awkward sensation, she could not overcome, and found it impossible to be

the first to communicate to Villeroy the project that was impending. But Augusta immediately informed him of Mrs. Pelham's determination.

Villeroy replied, that he should be very happy to be her escort: he did not directly understand that Virginia was to continue her companion, till Augusta added—"Virginia is half angry with me because I will not consent to make one of the party."

"Does Miss Stanhope go then?" cried Villeroy with quickness, as a flush spread over his face, but instantly recovering himself, he said to Augusta—"Why will you not go? I am sure the journey would be of service to you."

Virginia felt shocked: she thought Villeroy's aspect denoted displeasure; he was in the habit of calling her Virginia, and never till lately had addressed her

by the formal appellation of Miss Stanhope. She was too much hurt to be able to speak for a few moments, she then said with a serious countenance--

“ I go to oblige Mrs. Pelham. It cannot be supposed I should voluntarily leave my parents and country, to go on an excursion that promises so little satisfaction. But I conceive it my duty not to quit Mrs. Pelham, while she wishes me to continue with her. I only wish the friendship of others was as steady towards me, as mine is towards her.”

The tears sprang to her eyes, and she turned to the window. Augusta took this hint all to herself, but Villeroy believed it was meant obliquely to glance at him; he, in his turn felt hurt, and wished, yet feared to give utterance to his feelings.

“ I trust I shall be able to convince

you, that you wrong me, Virginia," said Augusta, as she seated herself at the breakfast table, where Mrs. and Mr. Temple now joined them.

Villeroy endeavoured to catch Virginia's eyes, but she studiously averted them. Had she looked at him the expression of his countenance would have convinced her, that he was not one of those friends who would exemplify the justice of her reflection. But Virginia was not sensible of this gratifying assurance and she experienced the most painful sensations, excited by a doubt nearly bordering upon certainty, that her regard was bestowed upon a thankless object.

Mrs. Pelham, contrary to custom, appeared at breakfast on this day; so impatient was she to inform her friends of her resolution, and to consult with Colonel Villeroy on the subject of their journey.

She found them all engaged in discussing it; and Mrs. Temple, as well as the rest of the party earnestly entreating Augusta to avail herself of this opportunity to change the air, and visit a country which must most certainly excite great interest in the breast of the traveller, and offer a pleasing variety to engage the attention. And on this latter account Mrs. Temple was desirous her daughter should go, and willingly relinquished the gratification of her society, in the sanguine hope that her spirits, and health, would be restored by the change.

Every objection Augusta could offer was speedily overruled, and a half reluctant consent at length drawn from her.

Mrs. Pelham was much pleased with this addition to the party, and Virginia was delighted at having so well succeeded; but Villeroy had thrown a cold weight upon her heart which could not be re-

moved, even by the pensive smile of her consenting friend.

The Colonel with more politeness than warmth, assured Mrs. Pelham his departure should be fixed at the period most convenient to her; and she named the third day from that, for the commencement of the journey.

Villeroy was conscious that since Mrs. Pelham's intention had been made known to him, he felt a new creature, and the prospect of enjoying Virginia's society so much longer, awakened in his breast a sensation of the purest pleasure; but so fearful was he of betraying his real feelings, and so apprehensive of being surprized into an unguarded demonstration of the ardent affection he experienced for Virginia, that he ran into the opposite extreme, and appeared rather displeased than gratified, while an uneasy restraint marked his manner; he said as little as

he possibly could on the subject, and seized the first opportunity of withdrawing to his own room.

So also did Virginia, for the purpose of writing to her parents, which she did; requesting them to direct their answer to a town which she was to pass thro' on her journey, as she should have left Hillbury before a letter from them could reach her there.

Villeroy, upon reflection, blamed himself extremely for the unfriendliness of his manner towards Virginia on hearing that she was to accompany Mrs. Pelham. It was evident that she felt it severely; and he was most anxious to do away the impression his conduct had made upon her.

Was this the behaviour due to the sister of his dearest friend, and brother-in-law? was she to be treated with negli-

gent indifference, or capricious attention? No, certainly such a line of conduct was highly blamable, nay unjustifiable. What then was to be done? Behave to her as he would towards a sister; maintain exactly the same demeanour in regard to her, as he did in respect to Augusta. This was what he ought to do, and what he knew to be right, and what he had a thousand times attempted to practice; but he ever found that he was going too far, when a sudden retrograde manœuvre would send him to the other extreme.

But it was absolutely incumbent on him, to determine on preserving a more consistent carriage, now that he was destined to continue some time longer the companion of Virginia; and, he resolved to make a vigorous effort to be reasonable, and to avoid either extreme, with equal circumspection.

He met Virginia at dinner, and anx-

ously sought her eye, but she studiously avoided looking at him, for she could not so far command her feelings, as to practice that perfection in the display of indifference, of looking at him as if she did not see him; but, she gave him no opportunity of addressing her, for she felt seriously offended with him.

Setting aside the friendship that existed between his sister and herself, and that of her brother for him, as well as the intimate union in which they had all lived while at Brighton; Virginia thought, and justly, that the connection existing between the two families entitled her to expect he would treat her with friendliness, if not with affection.

She could not recollect any thing in her conduct, which could have forfeited his regard, on the contrary, the sympathy, and the interest she had evinced for poor Clarence, and her attention to Augusta,

increased her claim to his esteem, and she considered his behaviour as capricious, offensive, and wholly unaccountable.

Her mortification was infinitely augmented by a supposition that he might perhaps imagine she was attached to him, and that she had prevailed on Mrs. Pelham to resolve on going abroad, in order that she might continue his companion, and that he had perhaps purposely made a display of his indifference towards her, in order to check any hopes she might entertain of having engaged his affections.

Humbled beyond measure at this suggestion, she resolved to convince him that he was mistaken, and determined not to take any particular notice of him either by addressing her conversation to him, or by otherwise seeking his attention, and merely reply to him as she

would to a common acquaintance, when he might think fit to accost her.

This was the resolution with which she descended to dine, how far she abided by it, time will shew; her resentment supported her at present, and enabled her to perform her part extremely well.

But Villeroy too well understood the nature of her feelings, not to be aware that her manner was dictated by wounded pride and offended friendship: to be the means of mortifying, and giving pain to the being he most loved, distressed him in the extreme; for his disposition did not resemble his poor brother's, or indeed that of many persons, who would rather torment themselves than not have the pleasure of teizing those over whom they wish to display their power.

He endeavoured, ineffectually during the whole evening, to attract Virginia's

attention, and betrayed, in a thousand trifling instances, his solicitude to please her, and erase from her mind the impression of his late conduct ; but she did not appear to notice it, and with a heavy heart Villeroy laid his head upon his pillow, for he felt miserable under her displeasure, yet angry with himself for taking so much trouble to regain her favour.

While Virginia, pleased, tho' perplexed by the evident uneasiness her behaviour had given him, and the anxiety he discovered to dissipate the reserve she maintained towards him, felt her heart softened, and forced herself to consider his inconsistency in an aggravated point of view, in order to support her in her resolution, of behaving towards him with a regular indifference.

One day alone intervened before that fixed on for the commencement of the

long journey, which was to be performed by easy stages, on account of Mrs. Pelham, who hoped, by stopping a few days from time to time at the principal towns on the road, to recruit her strength, to be able to reach the South of France, before the rigour of the season have set in.

CHAP. XV.



He spoke, and speaking sought her breast to move
With sighs, and tears, the eloquence of love!
Till like the melting flakes of mountain snow,
Where shines the sun, or tepid breezes blow,
Her anger late so fierce dissolves away,
And gentle passions bear a milder sway.

HOOLE'S TASSO.

AUGUSTA'S feelings were most painfully affected by the prospect of her separation from her mother, and certainly

nothing but Mrs. Temple's earnest entreaties could have prevailed upon her to leave a parent so tenderly beloved; but this very cause actuated her to comply with all her wishes; and the anxious mother considered not her own feelings, but the welfare of her child, to promote it, by the restoration of her health and spirits, which she trusted would be the result of this journey, was her most ardent desire.

Augusta could not be persuaded to forbear paying a parting visit to the melancholy, deserted cottage, the scene of her sorrows; but she promised she would not enter it, if she might only be allowed to water with her tears the rose tree, planted by the now mouldering hand of her lamented Clarence.

Virginia begged she would permit her to accompany her—to which Augusta consented, on conditions that her friend

should leave her at the garden gate, and wait for her at a seat placed round a tree in an adjoining field.

As they were quitting the house they encountered Villeroy, who, concluding that they were merely going to take a walk in the grounds, asked permission to escort them.

Augusta, with a look of pensive abstraction, said they should be glad of his company, though she was scarcely conscious of what she was saying, and was so lost in her own melancholy ideas, rendered more than usually gloomy by the thought of the approaching separation from her mother, that she remarked not the extreme languor apparent in the dialogue between Virginia and Villeroy as they proceeded, and the long pauses that were continually recurring, chiefly occasioned by the inflexible constraint that contracted Virginia's replies.

Villeroy observed, how lovely was the view from the eminence they were then traversing.

“ Beautiful !” was the laconic answer.

After a silence of about five minutes, Villeroy discovered that the leaves were beginning to fall. To this he received no answer at all ; for, as Virginia perceived several trees without a leaf remaining on them, she could not assent to his observation, that they were *beginning to fall* ; nor did she feel inclined to enter so far into the subject, as to point out to him where the towering elm stood stript of its honours, and thereby discover to him that he did not know what he was talking about, and that his mind was so engrossed with some superior interest, that he could not perceive what was almost before him.

What that interest was Virginia could not pretend to fathom; but being aware that when Augusta should have reached the cottage, she must necessarily be left *tête-à-tête* with Villeroy, she endeavoured to recollect herself, and to gather together in her own mind some topics for indifferent conversation, that might dissipate the excessive awkwardness that must otherwise mark the scene.

While Villeroy was thinking, that had Augusta been absent, he should not have been so much at a loss for a subject of conversation; though resolved to keep a strict guard over himself, he fancied he could have addressed Virginia with much greater ease had there been no third person present.

He forgot that the language one would address to a *sister* (for as such he wished to treat her) might be uttered before the whole world.

- He was not aware of Augusta's intention till he came within sight of the cottage, when it instantly suggested itself to his mind, and he endeavoured to dissuade her from proceeding; but she continued resolute, and pointing to the seat where she requested them to await her return, she pursued her way alone, while they repaired in silence to take possession of the place she had recommended to them.

Villeroy was not prepared for being thus suddenly left alone with Virginia, and he felt agitated and confused; and what he had wished but the moment before, he now almost lamented, dreading, lest he should be hurried into saying more than propriety could sanction, or by the embarrassment, and reserve of his manner, increase Virginia's displeasure against him.

She had that morning received a letter

from home, informing her that the marriage of her sister, which had been for some time in contemplation, had taken place to the satisfaction of all parties.

This was one of the topics Virginia had held in reserve to commence the conversation with.

She had mentioned at breakfast, that she had just received intelligence of her sister's marriage, and had been congratulated by the party on the occasion; and she now, in a composed voice, asked Villeroy, if he had never heard her brother mention Mr. Manners? (the gentleman who was now her sister's husband.)

"Manners!" repeated Villeroy; "what a son of Lady Louisa's?"

"No, not the same family," replied Virginia.

“ Oh, I did not know; I heard that young Manners was going to be married the other day to the — to the Dutchess of ———, I believe.”

“ Then,” returned Virginia, “ it was not very probable that it should be him, who had married my sister.”

“ Your sister ! I beg your pardon, I really did not know you were speaking of your sister—I did not exactly comprehend—you mentioned Mr. Manners.”

Virginia perceived that he scarcely knew a word she had said ; but having caught the name of Manners, was speaking at random ; but as she did not wish to appear to notice his abstraction, she said that Manners was the name of her brother-in-law, and that his father's estate was contiguous to their house in Hampshire.

They were now seated, and Villeroy was puzzling his imagination to discover how best to introduce, in an indirect manner, some kind of apology for his late behaviour, and at the same time convince Virginia of the lively friendship he entertained for her, and the pain it would give him, to think that she doubted it.

But this he wished rather to hint delicately than to enter into at large, as it would have required much ingenuity to have availed explanations which might have naturally been expected. The real motive of his conduct he could not avow, therefore the more cursory the allusion to it the better.

Virginia, on her part, was equally anxious to start some subject, which would furnish her with an opportunity of displaying her general sentiments, or rather what she wished Villeroy to believe were her sentiments, and by this means

convince him, that, if he imagined she was attached to him, he was mistaken.

This, with some dexterity, she continued to do, and still speaking of her sister, she continued with some energy, in order to secure Villeroy's wandering attention.

“ Nothing could be more eligible than the union my sister has formed; at least we consider it so, perhaps for the very reason others might conceive it the contrary. Mr. Manners is a second son, and though he possesses a comfortable competence, he is not rich. His connexions, though genteel, are by no means superior to her's, in short, he is every way a suitable match for her. She has no fortune, and had she married a man of rank or opulence, the world might have imputed it to interested motives, for which reason I think a marriage with a person exactly in one's own sphere of

life is most desirable—no person of common feeling could ever be happy under such an imputation.”

Villeroy replied with animation—

“Is it possible you can build your happiness upon so frail a basis as the opinion of the world? which is generally erroneous, continually fluctuating, frequently censures without cause, and applauds with as little judgment. Tranquillity and peace must be a stranger to that breast which suffers itself to be disturbed by the sarcasms of the world; and short lived is the triumph which results from its encomiums, which never fail to excite the malignant spirit of envy. I speak with energy, for I have seen the most innocent suffer from the injustice of the world, and the bosom of purity pierced by the arrows of slander. Heaven forbid that your happiness should be dependant upon the versatility of public

opinion. In my estimation the consideration of millions is of less consequence than the regard of one individual, whose friendship one is solicitous to secure. Indeed nothing can be more painful, at least nothing distresses me more, than the apprehension of having offended or displeased, though wholly unintentionally, those whose—whose—whose esteem I am most anxious to retain, and whose favour and good opinion are essential to my happiness.”

Virginia would have taken the latter part of this speech, as well as the former, in a general sense, had it not been for the embarrassment which Villeroy betrayed towards its conclusion; and from this she inferred that it was intended to convey an indirect allusion to his feelings in respect to herself.

After a short silence she returned—

“ Real friends are seldom estranged through unintentional offences, for people, who are convinced of each other’s friendship, are not likely to resent trifles, or imagine an affront is meant by a casual inattention. But repeated slights, and studied neglect, denotes a cessation of friendship on one side, which must necessarily occasion a diminution of regard on the other, and a reciprocal coldness generally; and I think very naturally increases to mutual dislike; for one cannot be entirely indifferent towards a person for whom one has once entertained a sincere regard—but one feels a degree of resentment against them for having disappointed the good opinion one had formed of them.”

Virginia spoke with some warmth. at her

Villeroy felt shocked; for, if this was the genuine language of her heart, he must conclude that she considered his

conduct in the most serious point of view, and was already completely estranged from him. Yet surely what she had said could not be applicable to him, the representation was too exaggerated.

He now said—"You have drawn a just and lively picture of what you nevertheless can never have experienced, for I am convinced that no person, whom you had once honoured with the title of your friend, could ever treat you with neglect or studied inattention. They must be something less than human if they could. You may, perhaps, have interpreted the gloom of dejection into negligence, and melancholy abstraction into inattention. But judging by my own feelings, I am confident that no person, who had once flattered themselves they possessed your good opinion, would intentionally do any thing that would hazard the loss of it, for having been once blessed with your regard, they

could not feel happy if deprived of it."

Villeroy looked fixedly at Virginia as he spoke—her eyes fell, and she was at a loss how to reply.

After a pause Villeroy continued, in a melancholy and affecting tone—

"Few are the sources of enjoyment I derive from the world, but the sweetest interest of existence is the regard and affection of my near relatives, and of some select friends. Of the former I have few, very few remaining. I have followed an only and dearly beloved brother to an early grave! I have seen him perish in the bloom of youth, and am doomed to mourn the loss of him, in whose society I had hoped to pass many a happy tranquil hour, and anxiously looked forward to the period, when his offspring should cling round my knees,

asserting their imposing claims on my affection! The awful stroke of death has annihilated this dream, and my wounded feelings seek balm and consolation in the sympathy and regard of the few friends who yet remain. And who are they? Editha, your brother, Clifford, they are all far away. Augusta requires more than I do the soothing offices of friendship; and you, who alone are left, and are so every way capable of sustaining the part of a friend, you seem to have forgotten the ties of that congenial union which existed in our happy party when at Brighton, and increase the weight on my aching heart, by the chilling reserve of your manners, and your total disregard of what I suffer."

Long before Villeroy had ceased speaking, Virginia's tears had been making most forcible efforts to escape, and they now fell upon her lap as she shaded her eyes with her hand.

He had drawn a picture, in which he had represented himself as the most miserable, deserted, and injured of men; and Virginia felt half persuaded that she had used him very cruelly. Yet she could not quite overlook the provocation she had received, though she at this moment pardoned every thing, feeling convinced that Villeroy, notwithstanding his inconsistency, experienced the most lively interest for her.

“You wrong me,” said she, in an agitated voice, “indeed you wrong me; the greatest pleasure and pride of my heart was the friendship I once flattered myself your sister and you entertained for me, and to have convinced you that it was thoroughly reciprocal would have given me the utmost satisfaction; but the apparent diminution of it, on your part, could not but be followed by constraint and reserve on mine.”

Her tears, and the emotion with which she spoke, almost overcame Villeroy; he took her hand, and pressed it fervently, but dared not trust himself to speak for some moments, lest he should utter all he felt. At length he said—

“ Oh! how much are you mistaken, Virginia, in conceiving it possible my regard for you could be diminished! Believe me that can never be the case. Be but yourself again, Virginia, and let me consider you as my dearest sister; treat me as you would a tender and affectionate brother. I ask but this; impute my inconsistencies to the infirmities of my temper, which should rather excite your pity than your resentment. Be indulgent to me, Virginia, you know not how much I suffer.”

Virginia's tears still continued to flow, and she faintly said—

“I will be all you wish me—I will supply the place of Editha; to afford you any consolation would give me sincere gratification.”

CHAP. XVI.



Ah ! mon Dieu, pour un rien le voila bien coupable !

Le mal est il si grand, qu'il soit irreparable ?

MOLIERE.

SCARCELY was this league of amity renewed, confirmed, and strengthened, by mutual professions of unalterable friendship, when Augusta, with pallid cheeks, and swollen eyes, rejoined her now harmonized companions, whose con-

verse and demeanour, as they re-traced their way, was of a very different cast to that they had maintained in coming. Though neither was voluble, an affectionate and soothing tenderness modulated their voices and spoke in their looks. Their opinions invariably coincided, and each seemed anxious to meet the wishes of the other.

Virginia believed that nothing more was requisite to her happiness than that this good understanding should continue uninterrupted—to be considered as Villeroy's dearest sister, she fancied the height of her ambition, while he persuaded himself, that by calling her sister, he had sufficiently demonstrated that he did not aspire to calling her by a more tender title.

He, therefore, did not reproach himself with having exceeded the bounds of

prudence in what he had said to Virginia; and he now considered it as incumbent on him to behave with brotherly regard towards her—and in permitting himself this indulgence, he felt that it would be the utmost amelioration his fate would allow of.

From this time he no longer shunned Virginia's presence, reserve and constraint were banished, and every attention and demonstration of affection was ascribed to the influence of brotherly love; and thus voluntarily hood-winked, Villeroy resigned himself to a passion, which nothing but absence could have subdued or conquered, and which it was quite impossible to conceal or restrain, while he was thus compelled, as it were, to continue with the object that excited it.

Virginia was happy, she did not ask herself why.

Thus both commenced the journey with feelings very opposite to those of their companions; the one dejected and miserable at parting with her mother, the other wretched through apprehensions for herself; but variety and change of scene had a most beneficial effect in both these cases.

I shall leave the travellers pursuing their journey towards the coast, while, with the wings of an author, I fly before them, and take a peep at Charles Clifford, who has for some time continued behind the scenes, and who will now re-appear before the audience, in a character not quite so interesting as that he has hitherto sustained.

But this conclusion may, perhaps, be erroneous; for it has often been observed, that “faultless monsters” are the most insipid of all God’s creatures—that is, in the *representation*; for, as to the ac-

tual *personification*, I much doubt if it ever yet appeared on the theatre of real life, which is a region absolutely fatal to its existence.

And further, it has been said, that a much stronger interest is excited by those in whom we see reflected some of our own natural infirmities.

I believe this to be a sophistical sentiment, which certainly owes its origin to imperfection, and consequently is very prevalent.

I may therefore conclude, that the majority of my readers will not like Charles Clifford the less, on discovering that he is by no means a perfect being, which, by the way, has been pretty obvious, from his very first appearance before them.

We left him languidly repelling the

advances of Mademoiselle Felice and *en train*, ultimately to become her dupe and plaything. Notwithstanding he still cherished in his heart the remembrance of Augusta, and venerated her idea, as that of some heavenly being, who was for ever placed beyond his reach, yet must ever retain an influence over him, and continue the hallowed object of his heart's adoration.

The sentiment her image created was all of heaven, the sensation Felice excited was all of earth—and, unfortunately, poor Charles had some earthly particles in his composition.

At the time Villeroy had quitted L—— so suddenly, Charles was persuaded that Felice was most violently attached to him—his vanity assured him that she would never have made such an imprudent display of her affection for any person but himself; it was, therefore, incumbent on

him at least to pity her, and, if he pitied, do all in his power to console her.

In short, compassion, vanity, and inclination, formed a league against poor Charles, who was insensibly inveigled by this formidable combination into a very unpleasant entanglement; and of this he was not fully aware, till Felice one day, with a very confident air, expatiated upon what she intended to do when she should become his wife.

Charles was aghast! the most distant idea of forming such a connection had never entered his head, nor had he ever said a word to Felice that could authorize her to entertain such a hope—and the expression of his countenance on this occasion could not be misinterpreted.

Felice opened upon him a torrent of reproaches, while her ready tears were seasonable auxiliaries, for they imposed

upon Charles, who reluctantly forbore to extenuate himself, fearing to increase her violent emotion.

What was to be done? make Felice his wife? Impossible! his soul revolted at the bare idea. Yet had she not said, he had destroyed her happiness for ever, that without him she would not support existence, and that she would follow him to every part of the globe, proclaim her wrongs, affirming that he had sought her heart with the most unremitting assiduity, and that when, unable any longer to conceal her affection for him, she had ingenuously confessed it, he had basely deserted her!

The accusation was false, but Charles had too much delicacy to tell her so, and disdained to shelter himself under the weakness of a woman.

He now felt himself in a most awk-

ward situation ; Felice affected indisposition, and not unfrequently practiced hysteric fits, together with all other methods so often found successful to work upon an inexperienced heart, and which have been known to deceive even the most wary ; for vanity whispers, “ it is love for thee that causes all this,” and the suggestion is so flattering to self love, that we are unwilling to detect the imposition.

A fortnight had elapsed since Villeroy's departure, and Charles hadn't yet heard from him : he longed to consult his friend in his present difficulty, for he determined to confide to him the extent of his dilemma, and be entirely guided by his advice, even should he recommend a marriage with Felice, though that was a step to which he felt the strongest repugnance.

Yet if honour required it, he would

not hesitate ; and Villeroy had so nice a sense of propriety, that Charles resolved to abide by his decision. Had he followed his inclination, he would immediately have quitted L——; but he dreaded Felice's violence, and scarcely doubted that she would follow him whithersoever he might go.

Felice's plan was to entrap Charles into a marriage with her ; whether the measures she had adopted to promote this object were most likely to succeed, we cannot pretend to determine ; be that as it may, she was perfectly convinced, that, if she could not bring the matter to an issue in the absence of his friend, she never should succeed when Villeroy should be near him, for in his penetrating eye she read a knowledge of her own heart.

She was pretty certain he never would permit Charles to fall into the net she

had spread for him, she therefore resolved to make the most of the present opportunity, and invited Clifford to a private conference. (for he had lately avoided as much as possible being left *tête-à-tête* with her), when she addressed him in terms, of which the following is the substance, but which received extraordinary energy from the flowery hyperbole of the French language, vociferated with all its native vehemence.

“Unable any longer to endure the misery you have occasioned me, I call upon you to decide my fate, and at once either raise me to happiness, or doom me to despair. Tell me if you are decided to act like a man of honour, or a villain?”

Charles started at this epithet, and his brow contracted.

She continued—“I see, I see you are

resolved upon my destruction—I see it in that frown—I see it in those flashing eyes. You are dead to every affection of the heart—you have ceased to love me, and wish to drive me to desperation by this display of your contempt.”

“ You mistake, you mistake me,” interrupted Charles; but she would not permit him to proceed.

“ Yes, barbarian, I know your design, and you shall be gratified—you shall behold me perish—you shall destroy me; for, oh, Charles!” her voice suddenly softening, “ I would die to give thee pleasure; yes, yes, I will die for thee, but never live for another.”

Her tears now streamed in torrents.

Charles endeavoured in vain to pacify her—nothing but a solemn promise, that he would make her his wife, would in

the least degree appease her. Her violence alarmed him, her emotion affected him, and the apparent strength of her attachment to him, softened his heart above all. He began to waver, "never shall I love another," thought he. "Augusta," at her idea his soul revolted from Felice, "but Augusta, she was lost to him for ever, and, by the misery her cruelty had occasioned him, he could conceive what the feelings of Felice must be at the thoughts of his deserting her. Was it not his duty to save her from such dreadful anguish? But Felice his wife! Felice to preside at his table! to be the mother of his children! Oh, revolting thought! the suggestion was insupportable, he would rather cease to exist than endure life, burthened with such an incumbrance."

While these ideas were rapidly revolving in his mind, Felice was performing all the absurdities of the most frantic agi-

tation, and suddenly taking a bottle of laudanum from her *ridicule*, she swore she would swallow the contents.

Charles endeavoured to wrest it from her, but it was some time ere he could succeed; when, with a look of wildness, she observed, that he would not always be near her to prevent her design, and to put a period to her existence was her solemn determination, if he deserted her.

Charles stood aghast. Was this the being he was solicited to entrust with his happiness? this victim of ungovernable passion to disgrace his name, and share his fate? Dreadful alternative! Must he either consent to this, or be accessory to her self-destruction? For, from the madness of her present behaviour, he doubted not she was in earnest, and he really believed that she would not hesitate to commit the most rash and des-

perate act. It was useless to attempt speaking reasonably to her, she would not listen.

Charles, though apparently composed, was now in reality much more agitated than she was.

He had repeatedly assured her, that he could not marry without the consent of his guardians, and that the legality of a union under such circumstances would certainly be disputed in England; but this she did not believe, and thought it only a subterfuge resorted to to deceive her.

Had Charles been as devoid of honour as she wished to represent him; he might have acceded to her wishes, made her *nominally* his wife, and have burst the feeble and imperfect tie whenever he thought proper.

But his noble mind rejected the bare suggestion of so base an artifice, and he resolved, should he be compelled to marry Felice according to the laws of France, he would, as soon as it was in his power, make her his wife by the laws of England.

No, he disdained to abuse her confidence, though she did voluntarily throw herself into his power: he believed her innocent, and imputed all her follies to the violence of her passion for him—and though he respected her not, he could not use her ill, it was not in his nature.

He now only entreated to be allowed till the next day to reflect upon the subject, observing, that to decide on so important a point, much consideration was necessary.

Felice thought that the longer he con-

sidered the less likely he was to decide in her favour; but finding that neither violence, or persuasion, could gain any farther concession from him, she permitted him to leave her, but not before she had repeated her desperate resolve not to survive his desertion of her.

CHAP. XVII.



What visions wake! to charm, to melt!

The lost, the lov'd, the dead are near!

Oh hush that strain too deeply felt!

And cease that solace too severe!

CAMPBELL.

CHARLES hastened to his chamber in a most unenviable state of mind, cursing his evil stars that had driven him

from his country, caused him to sojourn at L——, and precipitated him into the toils of Felice.

A letter was now brought him from the post-office.

It was from England, the superscription was in Villeroy's hand-writing, and his coat of arms was impressed upon a black seal.

Charles instantly concluded that Lord Calisbrook was dead, and without much emotion he opened the letter.

It was dated "London," for Villeroy had not written till after his return to town with his father; it contained but a few lines, they were as follow :

==

“ WITH reluctance, almost unconquerable, I compel myself to impart to you the melancholy and awful calamity that has befallen my family.

“ My dear and only brother——”

Charles started, as if a thunderbolt had struck him, and was so much agitated for a few moments, as to be unable to discern the words that followed.

“ My dear and only brother, a report of whose danger occasioned my precipitate departure for England, has been torn from us in the flower of his youth, by the inexorable hand of death.

“ A rapid consumption put a period to his brief existence.

“ I find it impossible to write more on this cruel subject, and my mind can admit no other.

“ I shall probably rejoin you in the course of a few weeks.

“ Your’s truly,

“ FERDINAND VILLERØY.”



Charles reperused the letter while his breath became short, and his heart beat violently. His imagination could scarcely support the current of thought that poured in upon it. The blood forsook his face, and again rushed into it in torrents, while his burning cheek seemed to confess his shame at experiencing a sensation so widely removed from sorrow, upon hearing of the death of a person, with whom he had once lived on the footing of a brother.

He tried not to think of Augusta, he endeavoured to forget that she had been the wife of Clarence—he sought to recal the image of that hapless being to his mind, such as he had been in the first days of their acquaintance.

He dwelt upon his personal grace, his good-humour, (for to him he had always been the same), and the friendship he had ever evinced for him, then thought of him mouldering in the grave.

In short, by every means in his power, he essayed to arouse his feelings, and excite his sensibility and grief—but all in vain, for, with a sigh of self reproach, he was compelled to admit that he could not feel sorry that Augusta was a widow, though independant of that consideration he could have lamented poor Clarence with sincere regret.

Suddenly the idea of Felice flashed on his mind ; he started up.

“Never,” thought he, “will I marry that weak, impassioned, inconsiderate girl. I do not, cannot, never did, love her—and rather would I die than now join my fate to her’s! No, no, henceforth will I devote myself to the distant, slender, perhaps deceptive, hope, that at some future period I may yet
————.

“But what am I dreaming of? Unworthy wretch that I am! rejoicing at the death of a fellow-creature, and madly dooming another to destruction!

“Unhappy Felice! must I drive thee to desperation, or must I drag on a hated existence, the slave of thy violence! the victim of thy unruly passions!

“But no, it is my own weakness, my own folly that causes all my anguish. I deserted Augusta, I drove her into the

arms of another ! But surely for that I have been sufficiently punished.

“ But again—have I not injured and insulted the pure image which ever reigned triumphant, by permitting the advances of this forward girl, this genuine French woman, and by allowing her to imagine she could please me ?

“ Oh, what have I been about—where were my senses—where was the refined and elevated remembrance of my Augusta, which I believed had hallowed my nature ?

“ Oh ! where was reason, prudence, and propriety, when I suffered myself to listen to this Circe, or cast a single glance upon her ?”

He continued to pace his chamber in a state bordering on distraction—when

summoned to dine, he declined descending or partaking of any thing, and thus he remained the whole evening; and as he had passed the day he passed the night, his perturbation precluding the possibility of repose.

CHAP. XVIII.



In the free code of first enlighten'd France,
 Marriage was broke for want of *covenant*;
 No fault to find, no gricvances to tell,
 But like tight shoes, they did not fit quite well.
 The lady curt'sied with, "*Adieu, Monsieur,*"
 The husband bowed or shrugg'd "*de toute mon cœur,*"
 "*L'affaire est faite,*" each partner free to range,
 Made life a dance, and ev'ry dance a change.

HENRY MACKENZIE.

WITH the earliest dawn Charles quit-
 ted the house and hastened through the

empty streets towards the country ; and, having proceeded to some distance, he threw himself on the earth under a tree, and there gave vent to the misery that oppressed him.

What to say to Felice, or how to wave her imposing demands, he was unable to conjecture—and he dreaded the moment that should present her to his sight, much more than he would have feared the fire of a combined army.

He had not lain many minutes in this state of torture, when he heard a footstep near him. He looked up and perceived the figure of a man, but it being yet scarcely light, he did not immediately recognize Captain Ferguson, the old gentleman, who has before been mentioned as being a boarder in the house of *Madame Le Brule*.

Charles started up confounded at be-

ing surprised in such disorder, and much amazed at meeting any body at such an hour, much more Captain Ferguson, as he had never heard that he was in the habit of walking at that time in the morning.

Charles replied with confusion and awkwardness to the old gentleman's *bon jour*.

Captain Ferguson did not pass on as he addressed him, but stopped, as if intending to join him.

Charles had a respect for the old gentleman, and would not willingly have behaved with rudeness towards him ; but few things could have annoyed him more than his joining him at this time, and had he followed the impulse of the moment, he would have turned his back upon him, and have left him to make what comments he chose upon his strange

behaviour. But he constrained himself to put on the semblance of civility.

“You take the promenade at very soon hour,” observed Captain Ferguson; “you not rise so very good time *ordinairement*, Monsieur Clifford; I hope you are not incommoded.”

These words were accompanied by a penetrating glance.

Charles stammered out something about not being able to sleep, and walked on hastily, but Ferguson kept up with him.

Charles now began to suspect that the *rencontre* was not accidental, but that his companion had followed him from motives of curiosity; for as their apartments were adjoining, he thought he might probably have heard him come out of his chamber.

Provoked at the idea of being watched, by one, to whom his movements could not possibly be of any consequence, he walked on the more rapidly, till the old gentleman began to be out of breath, and Charles hoped he would be soon too much fatigued to keep up with him.

Suddenly, Ferguson stopped and detained Charles by laying his hand impressively on his arm. His countenance bespoke much feeling and emotion, and the furrows which age had made, were softened by the beam of sympathy, as he thus addressed him.

“Monsieur Charles, I see you are not pleased of me for the cause that I follow you, but believe me that is not by curiosity, but to make for your good, and what is meant in good—*de bon part* I hope you will take not ill.”

Charles with surprize pictured in his

looks, said he did not doubt his good intentions, and begged he would proceed.

Ferguson hesitated before he could express himself; he spoke French as bad as he spoke English; his dialect was a base mixture of the two languages, and he was continually confounding the idiom of the one, in the phrase of the other.

At length, he said, in a tone of apprehension as if fearful of giving offence,

“It is of *Mademoiselle* that I would speak; she has the semblance to be very unhappy: that is what you think, I know well; and you must believe that it is because of you.”

Charles interrupted him, exclaiming with some warmth — “Your interference, Sir, in behalf of the lady is quite superfluous and ——— ”

“ *Mais* attendez, hear ; hear what I would say.”

“ Pardon me, Sir, I can hear nothing on that subject; I am competent to judge what is right, nor do I require to be taught my duty by any body.”

“ I wish not to teach you, Monsieur, if you would hear me, I would shew that I only say what I know, and prove you my *amitié*.”

“ I thank you, Sir,” said Charles, still maintaining an air of *hauteur* “ but tho’ it is the province of a friend to offer advice, it is that of a friend of *long* standing; a tried, a confidential friend; and even from such a quarter, it is not always well received. I cannot say I think it generous in any one, to watch my motions, and steal upon my retirement as if——.”

The old gentleman interrupted him, saying in a conciliating tone "Ah! Mr. Charles you are *bien vif*! 'Tis good that I am not *vif comme vous*, but you cannot impatient me enough to turn me from my purpose to serve you; I know you are not happy, and that makes the irritations, but I will not take *garde* of that, all that makes nothing, I am fixed to make you good!"

"To make me good!" echoed Charles resentfully, "I beg you will——"

"No, no," interrupted the old gentleman, "you miscomprehend me, I would say to make, that is *vous faire du bien*, make and do you know, that is all the same in François, I will do you good, *malgré* your *entêtement*."

"I really am at a loss to understand rightly the meaning, or motive of your words, Sir; but as I believe you intend

well I shall not resent an officiousness, I would not pardon in another."

"Officious I am not, but only anxious in regard to your welfare, to do for the best to save trouble to you; but the professions all make nothing. I will give proof to my good intent. I fear some imposture you have deceived——"

"Imposture! deceived! I will not hear such language," cried Charles, extremely angry, and not sufficiently collected to remark that this sentence was a literal translation of what in French had an exact contrary tendency.

"Some imposture deceive you," repeated the old gentleman with vehemence, and continued, "my manner to speak is very left; I would say *je parle gauche*, but you me comprehend *a la fin*—I will not cease but speak till all is said. That girl is not good girl, she has of ma-

lice, she has of artifice, and would make you the dupe. Believe me that true."

Charles was now all anxiety for him to proceed, and listened attentively, not attempting to interrupt him, though he could not restrain an occasional exclamation of amazement.

Captain Ferguson went on.

"I see from the first her design, the *doux yeux*, the *soupire*, the *sourire tendre*, the arch coquetry, the *cajole*. Ah, bah! I not so old to forget all that *encore*. Then the *maladie*, the *accès*, the *boude*, that all simple, she would make the interesting to cheat you, and make semblance *d'amour*—but no, no, she not love but herself in this world, no, not even the little child."

"Child! what child?" exclaimed Charles.

“ She has the child that was the first husband’s, ’tis nourished in the country—it has two years old.”

“ How, has Felice ever been married ?”

“ Yes, truly, she has been married two times, though she has but twenty-one years.”

“ Twice ! impossible ! surely you mistake.”

“ No, no, I deceive not myself.”

“ What, were they killed in battle then ?”

“ Oh no, for that, what need they should be killed ? They live both the two at this day.”

“ How ?”

“ Why that need not by the illumined laws of the *Republique Francois* that one husband should die for the wife to get the other. No, no, the divorce, the divorce, that so much commodious. Felice has the caprice, suppose she like the variety, she has had twice times the divorce, and now would have three times the husbands. You will not be surprised less when I yet tell you, you have seen one of the husbands—that is the first one, the papa for the little child.”

“ What do you mean? I know not a creature at L—— out of the house of *Madame Le Brule* ?”

“ Nor need you search farther than that house to meet the man—you do see him in the person of *Le General*. I feel no surprise at your *etonnement*, or that you regard me incredulous, but all is true like the gospel. *Mon General* is the first husband to Mademoiselle. I you

tell from the beginning the history of Felice.

“ When I am come at the first a pensioner at *Mam’e Le Brule*, her girl had but fifteen years, but that was one woman *tout à fait*. She was always very *coquette*, and had much lovers to follow her.

“ One, two years passed, when the regiment of Le General, then lieutenant, come in quarters to L——. He put himself to gain the favour of Mademoiselle—they know each other just fifteen days, when they marry themselves, and Monsieur come live for nothing *chez Mam’e Le Brule*.

“ Not long time pass when the new married commence the quarrels—at the end of six month they are *divorcé*, both of accord, *Mon General s’en va*—little of time after *Misse s’accouche*, send the

enfant to the *campagne*, and commence young girl again.

“ She next take the *fantaisie* for one of the *gens d’armes*, that follow Bonaparte when he come to see L——. That was a pretty boy, *joli garçon*, he make believe he was of the *noblesse*, in the time of the king—she marry herself again, and the *grenadier* live free at *Mam’e Le Brule* when he will.

“ But he take himself away with Bonaparte, but from time to time to see her when he pass for duty by the town.

“ *En fin* she discover that he cheat her, that he is no noble, but one cobbler before he was taken for the conscript. She make sign to be furious. He tell her he been married ten times of the same fashion, and five times *divorcé*, to please the wife; but he got five still, but that

she should be *divorcé* if that would please her.

“ *Eh bien*, the wife become once more *Mademoiselle*; *à-peine* had she undone herself of this *embarras*, when Monsieur, the first husband, come back, make the visit to his *ci-devant* wife.

“ He is now *Mon General*, she meet him of good will, they accommodate the best possible together, and I think well she would have accomplished to bring him to marry her again, if you was not come in the moment.

“ Then she change her manœuvre, and think it best to get the English squire, and get to John Bull, who not like the *divorcé*; for, if she get the French General again, he jump through her fingers, and break the knot all at his voluntary.

“ Now, Charles, what think you of *la belle Felice*? All this relation you would have heard from any person in L——, for it is enough public; but you never communicate with those *gens*, you no like those people, I know.”

“ I really am so much astonished, so inexpressibly amazed, that———”

Charles could not proceed, he was too much delighted to be able to give utterance to his feelings, for in this account, which proved Felice to be an object, concerning whom it would have been absurd to entertain the slightest degree of apprehension, he felt himself completely released from all embarrassment in respect to her, as he could not doubt that when once convinced he was acquainted with her whole history, she would desist from persecuting him.

He caught Captain Ferguson's hand, and grasped it with the fervour of gratitude, but was wholly at a loss for expression.

“ I see,” said the old gentleman, “ you can no more come back from your astonishment ; but yet more will I tell you, but this discovery I make not by my own fault. You must recal that *Le General* was jealous *de vous* in the beginning. *Mademoiselle* fear he agitate himself to advertize you of her design, and one day I read in the little apartment, *auprès de la salle-à-manger* ; they think no one there, for you and Monsieur Villeroy were at the promenade, and they never think of me. The General and *Misse* are alone, they commence the *tracas*, he throw the *sottise*, she is *enragé*, he laugh at her, and say he never permit her to succeed with you, without she make the promise most solemn, to give a sum of

money very handsome to him when she be your wife.

En fin that is finished by the compact, and from that time I keep strict watch over her; I think you have too much of the good sense to tumble into the *filet*. I believe you find Felice very well *pour vous amuser*, but she never take you prisoner.

“ But when she begin to make the mein interesting, and pretend the indisposition, I have apprehensions this *chicane* would have success, and I was resolute to advertize you of the danger.

“ I perceive you very unquiet, and when I find last day that you would not quit your chamber, I doubted not that regarded Felice, for I knew you had been together in the morning, and as I pass the door of the apartment, I hear very high voices, and then the sobs.

“ And I was embarrassed and puzzled all the night in thinking how to speak to you. I hear your door open, and looked by the window, when I see the way you go, and hurried myself to make the toilette and follow.

“ Ah, Mr. Charles, that is not the good house for the young man; for the *vieillard* that makes nothing, but the young would make the best to escape himself *tout-à-coup*.”

“ Captain Ferguson,” cried Charles, shaking him heartily by the hand, “ I am overwhelmed with a sense of what I owe you, and confounded at the remembrance of my ungracious behaviour towards you, but I was misled by an idea that you were the champion for this unworthy girl, and that you wished to persuade me to unite myself to her. I hope this will be some extenuation of my con-

duct ; I shall immediately follow 'your advice, and fly from a residence I sincerely wish I had never entered. But never shall I forget what I owe you. You have no conception of the extent of the obligation you have laid me under, nor of the happiness I experience since you have relieved my mind from the intolerable weight that oppressed it. Most sincerely do I hope that the period may arrive when I shall have an opportunity of convincing you of my gratitude."

This conversation was continued for some time longer, both agreed that it would be prudent to return to the house before the family was stirring, and to separate on entering the town, as they might be observed together, and Felice by that means discover from whom Charles had gained the information respecting her.

Though the good old man gloried in having saved him from her toils, he wished, if possible, to escape the vengeance of the infuriate fair.

CHAP. XIX.



Su mauvaise conduit, insupportable en tout,
Met a chaque moment la patience a bout.

MOLIERE.

CAPTAIN FERGUSON had been accustomed for many years to the house of *Madame Le Brule*—she kept a very good table, and it would have put him

very much out of his way had he been obliged to seek another asylum.

Felice was of no consequence to him, she never troubled him either with her conversation or attentions, and for peace sake he was desirous of keeping friends with her.

He therefore gave Charles a caution not to divulge the name of his informer, and, if possible, to prevent her suspicions glancing upon him.

They both gained their chambers without encountering any one; and now Charles began to consider how it would be most advisable to proceed.

The result of his reflection was, that, as there was no reason why his departure should be private, or that he should abscond, as if he had done something he was ashamed of, he would openly an-

nounce to *Madame Le Brule* his intention of proceeding immediately to Paris, as it was uncertain when his friend Mr. Villeroy might rejoin him, and he should wait his arrival there, being heartily sick of L——.

This he determined to mention at breakfast, when he hoped Felice would be present, and by that be prepared for what she had to expect.

As he wished, he appeared at the breakfast table, attired in an interesting dishabille, and assuming an air of extreme languor and dejection.

She had not intended to descend to breakfast, but, having heard from her mother that Charles was below, and appeared quite well, and perfectly composed, her apprehensions were aroused; and they did not abate upon being saluted by him with a cold but indifferent bow.

She was extremely disconcerted by his whole demeanour, which bespoke perfect calmness, and even cheerfulness, which he seemed to have some difficulty in restraining from encreasing to merriment. But what was her consternation, when he turned to her mother, and said, “Madam, I find by a letter I yesterday received from Mr. Villeroy, that it is uncertain when he may return to this country, I shall therefore set out in the Diligence this evening for Paris—you will be kind enough to let me know what I am indebted to you.”

Amazement sat on the features of Madame and *Mon General*, complacency on those of Captain Ferguson, and rage and indignation on those of Felice, while she was so much aghast as absolutely to turn pale, which she was rarely in the habit of doing. She threw herself back in her chair, and yielding entirely (as she ever did) to her feelings, and inclina-

tions, she began kicking and screaming with fury and indignation, while this madness was termed by her mother a violent hysteric.

Charles immediately rose and quitted the room, and repaired very composedly to his chamber to prepare for his departure.

But here he had not been many minutes, when he was summoned to attend *Mademoiselle*, whom he found alone, still betraying strong signs of the paroxysm he had left her in.

“Will you kill me?” screamed she, as he entered the room.

“Felice,” returned he, without approaching her, “it is time to finish this farce. I know you for what you are, and having said this much, it is useless to add, you no longer possess the small-

est influence over me. I resign all interest in you to your two husbands and child, whose prior claims to your affection I am not inclined to dispute."

Felice was too much overcome with shame, astonishment, and consternation, to be able to say a single word.

Charles, as he moved towards the door, added--

"Adieu, Felice, you have imposed upon me, and even promised your first husband a sum of money to connive at the imposture. I forgive you since I have escaped, and hope this will be a warning to you for the future to avoid artifice and deceit."

Having said this he quitted the room.

Felice's fury was now all turned against her *dear first* husband, *Mon General*,

who she doubted not had betrayed her, being thoroughly persuaded that no one but he and herself could be acquainted with what had past between them concerning the money.

No sooner had Charles left her than she started up, resolved to go and vent her spleen and disappointment on the head of the culprit, who she believed had deceived her. But before she reached the door, she recollected that she had now lost all chance of succeeding with Charles, and that she had therefore nothing better to do at present, than to resume her old project of attaining the rank of a General's lady. It would, therefore, be extremely improvident in her to exasperate *Mon General*, who had certainly evinced his great anxiety to repossess her, by his having betrayed to Clifford what he knew must prove an insurmountable objection to his forming a union with her.

Thus a revolution happily took place in the politics of Mademoiselle, that prevented all danger of good Captain Ferguson being brought into an unpleasant predicament, as a minute enquiry into *how* this affair had transpired might have occasioned a discovery of the truth.

With the most heartfelt satisfaction Charles turned his back upon L——, after having taken a kind farewel of Captain Ferguson, and repeated to him his expressions of gratitude.

From him Charles learnt that Felice was by no means in a state of desperation, as he had surprised her conversing with *Mon General* in very amicable language.

On reaching Paris Charles took up his residence at an hotel *garnis*, intending to remain there till he should hear again from Villeroy, to whom he wrote a letter of condolence, at the same time in-

forming him of his change of situation. Charles also wrote to Captain Ferguson, to whom he sent an elegant gold snuff box, as a remembrance, and requested him to forward his letters to him according to the direction which he gave.

CHAP. XX.



While sad suspense and chill delay
Bereave my wounded soul of rest,
New hopes, new fears from day to day,
By turns assail my lab'ring breast.

SIR WILLIAM JONES.

IN the gay, dissipated, and dissolute city of Paris, Charles lived in as great retirement as he could have done in the bosom of *le forêt noire*; he scarcely

ever stirred out, except in the dusk of the evening to take a solitary walk in some of the most secluded promenades. He lived entirely by himself in his own apartments, his whole imagination engrossed with the new hopes that had taken possession of it, anticipating the period when propriety would permit him to seek an opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with Augusta, and laying a thousand plans whereby he might again ingratiate himself into her favour, and recover that place in her heart he firmly believed he had once occupied. It was his present intention to remain abroad, until a decent time should have elapsed, and then to repair to the house of Mr. Beryl, the vicinity of which to the abode where he concluded Augusta would reside, would render the situation peculiarly eligible for him, and be very favourable to the advancement of his plan of operations.

He was frequently tortured by the remembrance of Augusta's treatment of him at Brighton, but he tried to persuade himself that it arose from pique, nay, that the same motive had actuated her to marry with such precipitation. In short, he was resolved to indulge himself in the most sanguine hope, that at least he might have the pleasure of anticipation, even should he be doomed to disappointment.

Yet still may Hope her talisman employ,
To snatch from heav'n anticipated joy ;
And all her kindred energies impart,
That burn the brightest in the purest heart ! *

Charles had long been a stranger to enjoyment of this nature,—long had the gloom of dejection darkened all his pri-

* Campbell.

vate hours, and shaded with its sombre hue all his future prospects.

Now the beams of hope again burst forth from a source which had long conveyed to him nothing but despair, and from whence he had never again expected to derive the slightest gleam of pleasure; the prospect was suddenly changed, and his animated expectation was in proportion to his late absolute hopelessness.

Thus some weeks passed away, and he became very anxious for Villeroy's arrival, for through him he hoped to learn by indirect questions, how Augusta bore her loss.

At length he received a letter from him, forwarded from L——. It informed him, he might expect his friend in the course of a few days.

Herein Villeroy mentioned his having been in Yorkshire for a short time, and from thence he wrote, prior to his being apprized of Mrs. Pelham's intention of accompanying him.

It appeared also that he had not received Clifford's letter, informing him of his being at Paris; it had been directed to Lord Calisbrook's, and through his negligence it remained in town, and was never forwarded.

From the earliest period Charles could expect his friend, he walked out several miles on the road by which he knew he must come in the hope of meeting him, though he was uncertain by what conveyance he might travel. But day after day, and evening after evening, he returned spiritless and disappointed to his hotel.

A fortnight passed over in this man-

ner, and Charles, with listless steps and languid expectation, set out one afternoon upon his accustomed saunter.

He had proceeded about two miles, when he perceived an English coach and four approaching. It never entered his head to look for Villeroy in such an equipage, but merely from a natural impulse to see whom it contained he glanced into it as it passed him, and beheld a gentleman who he would have been certain was Villeroy, had he not observed that the carriage also contained several ladies.

He immediately concluded he was deceived, by an accidental resemblance between this gentleman and Villeroy; and upon reflexion, he was the more convinced he was mistaken, as it was most unlikely that Villeroy should be travelling in that style, and still more improbable that he should be accompanied by

ladies. Whoever the gentleman might be, he had not perceived Charles, as he appeared engaged in conversation with one of the females.

Charles proceeded onward till he reached the usual bourne of his promenade, which was the end of the first league, when he reluctantly turned his face towards the smoky metropolis, and with a most deserted melancholy sensation, and a disgust amounting to antipathy to every thing he beheld, he traversed the dirty suburbs of this most dirty city, and repassed the *porte St. Dennis*, while the dusk of twilight gave additional gloom to every object.

Having reached the hotel he hastened to his apartments, which consisted of a drawing-room and chamber adjoining: he entered the former with precipitate impatience, eager to avoid the eyes of every observer.

But with amazement he started back, on perceiving a lady sitting at the table, on which lights were placed.

She also started and arose at his abrupt entrance, saying—

“ I fancy, Sir, you have mistaken the apartment.”

Charles could not reply, he was transformed into an immoveable statue of astonishment ; and could scarcely persuade himself he was awake, as his eyes rested on the elegant figure, clad in the deepest mourning, while a black crape veil turned aside discovered to him the features of Augusta.

The revulsion in his whole system was so violent that he absolutely lost the power of speech.

She imagined she was addressing a

stranger, for Charles wore a French great coat, trimmed with fur, with the collar up to his ears : the apartment was large, and the candles cast but an imperfect light on the spot where he stood ; besides which, Augusta had not the slightest expectation of seeing him, as I shall hereafter explain.

But though she was almost the last person he could have hoped to have seen in that place, Charles instantly recognized the image his heart was full of, and had he been in doubt, her voice would have terminated his uncertainty.

He immediately perceived that she did not know him, and that her countenance evinced some alarm at his remaining stationary instead of retiring.

He now recollected himself sufficiently to bow and withdraw ; for, although this certainly was the apartment appropriated

to his use, he was not inclined to dispute it with the fair object who had now possession of it, and, closing the door after him, he stood for a few moments bewildered, and scarcely knowing where he was, what to do, or where to go.

While he was thus lost in a whirl of ideas, he felt his hand seized, and looking up beheld Villeroy.

After the most cordial greetings, Villeroy enquired if Charles had received his letter, informing him what party he was to accompany?

Charles replied in the negative.

“ And you have been into that room?” rejoined Villeroy, pointing to the door of the apartment Charles had just quitted.

“ I have,” answered the youth.

“Then you must indeed have been surprised,” cried his friend; “but come with me to the chamber I have secured, and I will explain away your astonishment.”

CHAP. XXI.



Ah ! que le ciel m'oblige, en offrant à ma vue,
Les célestes attraits dont vous êtes pourvue,
Et, quelque mal cuisant que m'aient cause vos yeux
Que je prends de plaisir à les voir en ces lieux.

MOLIERE

THOUGH Villeroy had written to apprise Charles he might expect him, he nevertheless wrote again, after having been informed of Mrs. Pelham's inten-

tion of going abroad, and that Augusta also was to be of the party.

It may be remembered that Villeroy was acquainted with the state of his friend's heart, and he could therefore well conceive how this piece of intelligence would agitate and surprise him; and he was anxious to prepare him for what he might anticipate.

But this letter as well as the other had been directed to Clifford at L——, under a supposition that he was still there, and it unfortunately fell into the hands of Felice, Captain Ferguson not being in the way; and she, after attempting to peruse it, committed it to the flames, merely out of spite, as she could not comprehend the purport of it, and was therefore ignorant whether or not it was of consequence.

Thus Charles remained unconscious

of the pleasure that was in store for him.

Villeroy fully expected to find Charles at L———, but he made no mention of him to any one but Virginia—he felt a reluctance to speaking of him to Augusta.

He knew not if she had ever had a prepossession in his favour, but he rather suspected that she had, from what he had gathered from Charles; but as they had not appeared to be acquainted at the time they had been at Brighton, Augusta might imagine that he was ignorant of their former knowledge of each other, and Villeroy avoided mentioning Clifford in her hearing, as he thought it probable she might feel some averseness to meeting him.

Thus Augusta knew not if Charles was still at L———, or whether he had left

that place on Villeroy's coming to England. She, of course, never made any enquiries respecting him, and she was angry with herself when the remembrance of him recurred to her mind—indeed, for some time past, one idea alone had engrossed her imagination, that of the awful scene still so recent.

It is true, when the plan of her going abroad was first suggested, the recollection of Charles Clifford for an instant presented itself; but shocked and distressed at the involuntary direction her thoughts had taken, she instantly endeavoured to turn them into another channel; and speedily succeeded, for the image of her dear Clarence was still fresh in her heart.

After a quick passage, and most delightful journey to Virginia and Villeroy, (the former of whom continued to a very

exalted degree of *sisterly* affection to return the *fraternal* tenderness of the latter), they reached L———; and having seen the ladies comfortably accommodated at the hotel, Villeroy hastened to the house of *Madame Le Brule*.

Here he learnt that Clifford was at Paris, and from Captain Ferguson he received his direction. On asking that gentleman if he had forwarded his letters, he replied in the affirmative, for he knew not of the one that had been destroyed; and thus Villeroy concluded that Charles would be prepared to expect them, for in his letter he had told him, that it was Mrs. Pelham's intention to proceed through Paris, where the two gentlemen had long designed to spend some weeks.

Augusta, on finding herself at L——, could not help remembering that Charles Clifford had been there but a short time

before, but as during two days, which they spent at L——, in order to recruit Mrs. Pelham's strength, she neither saw or heard any thing of Clifford, she naturally concluded he had left that town; but whither he had flown to she knew not, and thought she did not wish to know.

Nothing worth recording occurred during their journey from L——— to Paris.

On entering the French capital, the postillions stopped to enquire where the party chose to be conveyed to, and Villeroy mentioned the hotel where he had been told Charles had apartments, for he himself was a total stranger to the town, and ignorant where the best accommodations were to be met with; and he thought it not improbable (supposing Charles expected them) that he might have secured apartments for them.

On reaching the hotel he alighted from the carriage, requesting the ladies to remain in it, till he had ascertained what sort of accommodation the house afforded.

In a parley with the *maitre d'hotel*, of whom Villeroy enquired for Mr. Clifford, he found that there were chambers enough vacant to suit the party, but no *salle-a-manger*.

Villeroy requested to be shewn to Mr. Clifford's apartment, expecting to meet him there, for the *maitre d'hotel* knew not that he was gone out; but upon finding the room vacated, Villeroy observed to his conductor, that Mr. Clifford was a particular friend of his, that he would be one of their party, and he was convinced would without hesitation give up his sitting-room to the ladies—he would,

therefore, conduct them to it, and take all the responsibility on himself.

The man bowed acquiescence, as from the appearance of Villeroy, and the style of the equipage at the door, he could have no doubt of his respectability.

Villeroy returned to the ladies, informed them they could be accommodated, and conducted them to a very elegant drawing-room, which they took possession of, without in the least suspecting that they were interlopers.

Villeroy forbore to mention to whom it was appropriated, as he apprehended some objection might be raised, and scruples entertained respecting the propriety of thus unceremoniously securing to themselves by right of possession what might be considered as belonging to another—to one too with whom some of the party

might not wished to be on quite so familiar a footing.

For these reasons the Colonel thought it most prudent to conceal the particulars of the case from the ladies, whom he left to themselves, saying he would order tea and coffee, for they had taken an early dinner on the road, Mrs. Pelham having of late objected to dining late, under an idea that it did not agree with her.

Villeroy descended expressly for the purpose of keeping a look out for Clifford, whom he momentarily expected, as he was informed by a *valet de place*, who had attended Charles since he had been at Paris, that he never staid out after dark.

Charles happening accidentally to enter the hotel by a back way, missed his friend, and proceeding directly to his

apartment, which was then only occupied by Augusta (Virginia having accompanied Mrs. Pelham to take a survey of her chamber), he was thus unspeakably but most agreeably surprised.

A short explanation from Villeroy was sufficient to make every thing intelligible to Charles, who was by him informed that Mrs. Villeroy had been induced, through the persuasions of her mother, united to those of all her friends, who were alarmed at her heavy dejection, and declining health, to make one of their party.

“Does she know you expected to meet me here?” asked Charles.

“No,” returned her friend; “but be assured she will receive you with politeness. Her affections are buried in the grave of her husband—I believe she at

this moment has scarcely an interest in existence, but the natural amiability of her disposition makes her ever studious to spare the feelings of others—I am sure she will treat with complacency a friend of mine.”

Charles sighed, and having declared his resolution of resigning his chamber also to the ladies, as it was more convenient from being on the same floor with the drawing-room, he begged Villeroy would go and prepare them to receive him.

Charles requested at the same time that he would not let them know they were obliged to him for their accommodations.

The room Villeroy was to occupy had two beds in it, and it was agreed Charles should have possession of one of them,

and he gave orders to his valet to remove all his things from his late chamber to the one he was now to share with his friend.

CHAP. XXII.



They sin who tell us love can die;
With life all other passions fly,
All others are but vanity.
In heav'n ambition cannot dwell,
Nor avarice in the vault of hell;
Earthly these passions of the earth,
But love is indestructible!

SOUTHEY'S *Curse of Ikehama*.

MEANTIME Colonel Villeroy joined the ladies, who were now seated round

the tea table, and Augusta just recounting the incident of a strange gentleman having entered the room, whom, she said, she concluded to be a Frenchman, as he did not appear to understand her when she spoke, but had hesitated a few moments before he retired.

“He had probably mistaken the apartment,” observed Virginia.

“Oh, no doubt,” rejoined Augusta, “for he bowed with great respect and much embarrassment when he withdrew.”

“I am glad I was not here,” said Mrs. Pelham; “I am sure it would have alarmed me very much, and made me extremely ill. A man entering in that extraordinary manner, it would have terrified me to death.”

A pause now occurring, Villeroy had

an opportunity of opening the subject he was impatient to introduce.

“ I have just seen a particular friend of mine,” said he, “ and an old acquaintance of your’s, Mrs. Pelham and Virginia—indeed, I expected to find him at Paris—I am sure you remember Charles Clifford, who was with us at Brighton ; but I believe he was ill and confined to the house all the time Augusta was there.”

A faint flush had tinged the cheeks of Augusta at the annunciation of the familiar name, but it speedily faded away, and she said with composure—

“ I have seen him.”

She at this moment was endeavouring to fix her whole mind on the idea of her lost Clarence, and she succeeded so well, that when Villeroy quitted the room, in

order to summon Charles into their presence, her heart beat very little quicker than usual.

Such was not the case with Charles, who could scarcely breathe at the bare idea of being in the company of Augusta. He was busied in making some alterations in his dress when Villeroy came in quest of him.

But Charles was yet a few moments ere he could tear himself away from the looking-glass; he thought his hair did not sit so well as usual, and asked Villeroy, if he did not think he was very much altered for the worse since first he had known him?"

"I believe you are," returned his friend, "for I did not then think you vain."

"I deserve your reproach," cried

Charles, hurrying from the glass towards the door; "but I am really afraid they will not know me."

"Oh never mind, I will introduce you, and then they cannot be at a loss."

Had Charles been arraigned before the lord chief justice for some high crime and misdemeanor, he could not have felt more awkward and confused, than he did when following Villeroy into the presence of the ladies. Yet he never looked handsomer in his life; his cheeks were flushed, and his eyes bright with animation.

Virginia instantly held out her hand to him, as did also Mr. Pelham, and both welcomed him as an old friend.

This diverted his attention for the moment from Augusta. She forced herself to look at him, being convinced she could

behold him without the smallest emotion —nor did she evince any, though a sudden and universal aching for a moment affected her frame, and she felt that she trembled; for which reason she did not rise, which she otherwise would have done (though it is an unnecessary exertion in the present advanced state of politeness) to return a bow most profoundly respectful, which she received with an easy but distant inclination of the body.

Charles felt in some measure reassured when this ceremony was over, and took a seat, which was offered him between Mrs. Pelham and Virginia, and endeavoured to hide his embarrassment, by appearing extremely interested, as he enquired most solicitously after the health of the former.

But scarcely one word of her reply did he hear, as she entered into a minute de-

tail of the nature and variety of her complaints; and spoke with an animation which no other subject could excite.

“ Ah, Mr. Clifford, I was quite a different creature when you knew me at Brighton—I could take two or three turns on the Steyne without feeling fatigued, and that you know is a considerable length. You remember the Steyne, surely?”

“ Perfectly, ma’am,” returned Charles, suppressing a sigh, and longing, yet not daring to catch a glance at Augusta, whose eyes, however, his would not have encountered.

She was busily engaged, mentally repeating with a fervency that indicated a doubt of her own stability,

“ Oh, my beloved regretted Clarence! why am I doomed to wander far from

the spot that contains your dear remains, and forced to support society which is hateful to me, while my soul can admit nothing but sorrow for thy untimely end. Oh what an abuse does it seem to thy sacred memory, that I should be thus compelled to endure the company of indifferent people, when I ought to be lamenting over the grave of the most affectionate of husbands."

With reflexions such as these she fortified her mind to repel every sensation of pleasure, feeling a strong degree of self reproach at the idea that she could experience the slightest degree of satisfaction at beholding Charles, and thus enveloping herself in a cloud of melancholy, she sat apparently lost to every thing that was passing around her.

Virginia and Villeroy could always find something to say to each other, which never failed to prove extremely in-

teresting to both parties, an advantage the most affectionate *brothers* and *sisters* cannot always boast of, they being in general so perfectly acquainted with each other's sentiments and opinions on most subjects, as to render a communication of them almost superfluous, and thus they are frequently at a loss for conversation when left to entertain each other.

But Villeroy and Virginia never found themselves in this predicament, and were now conversing with much animation, while Mrs. Pelham continued to engage the ear of Charles, though not his attention.

"When we left you at Brighton, Mr. Clifford—no, I believe you went first—I really have forgot."

"Indeed," said Charles.

"Well," continued Mrs. Pelham, re-

gardless of his abstraction, while pursuing her favourite theme, “ well, I returned into Hampshire, and suffered a great deal on the road ; and when I got home I was worse than ever ; that house always disagreed with me, and there is something in the air of that place that made me quite asthmatic, so I resolved on going to Harrowgate ; indeed I thought I should have died on the road.”

“ Really.”

“ However I got there at last, almost at Death’s door, and we took lodgings.”

“ Very extraordinary.”

“ It was amazing how much better I got all of a sudden at Harrowgate ; and I had every prospect of a rapid recovery, when a most unfortunate circumstance threw me back, and made me worse than

ever. I have never recovered it, and I am sure I never shall."

"Is it possible?"

Mrs. Pelham now put her mouth close to Charles's ear, and with a doleful countenance said, in a whisper—

"Poor Mr. Clarence Villeroy! poor unfortunate creature! he gave me my death-blow. He lodged in the same house with us, and from the very first moment I was in his company I felt myself infected. The atmosphere instantly struck upon my lungs! I was sure he would die! My complaints immediately assumed a consumptive aspect—I got rapidly worse, and formed a sudden resolution of hastening to the south of France, where perhaps I may be able to stand the winter. I thought I should have died in crossing the water; the sea air was too keen for me, it absolutely destroyed me

—I was so completely exhausted on my first day's journey, that I was obliged to stop at Boulogne, and send for the English physician who resides there—and he unfortunately, poor man, has a liver complaint himself, and he was too ill to come to me. The moment I heard that, I felt that I could not exist the night without medical assistance, and I was determined to send for a French doctor; but luckily the good English physician finding himself better towards the evening came to me. I told him immediately I was confident one of my lungs were completely gone. I can feel that it is absolutely wasted away, and my liver covered with spots. I am sure of it. He wanted to persuade me out of it, but I knew better than to suffer myself to be deceived. However he gave me medicines, and a store to keep by me. I think they have done me good; no doubt this doctor, from having a liver complaint himself,

may the better understand how mine may be affected."

The name of Clarence Villeroy had arrested Clifford's attention, and the tenor of the subsequent words filled him with alarm, lest, if poor Clarence's disorder was of so inveterate and contagious a nature, its baleful effects might now be discovering themselves in Augusta, who certainly looked much paler and thinner than when he had before seen her. But the reflexion of a few moments, and the remainder of Mrs. Pelham's speech, convinced him that a distempered imagination was her chief complaint, and that she was the victim of a hypochondriac fancy.

No sooner was the tea equipage removed, than Mrs. Pelham, having exhausted her favourite topic, declared that she found herself too much indisposed to sit up any later, and accordingly she repaired to her chamber.

Augusta, glad of an excuse for retiring, immediately followed her example, and Virginia was thus compelled to do the same, or be left the sole female with the gentlemen ; she therefore took possession of a small room inside Mrs. Pelham's, and employed the hours that intervened before bed-time in writing to her mother.

CHAP. XXIII.



What anguish now her gentle bosom rends,
What doubts, what fears her lab'ring mind perplex.

LORD CARYSFORD.

AUGUSTA had not yet seen the apartment she was to occupy, therefore, on being conducted to the chamber next the sitting-room, she was not aware that any change in the arrangements had

taken place, nor was she informed of it.

On looking round the room, she perceived that there was another door beside that by which she had entered.

She concluded that this opened into the drawing-room, and was soon convinced of it by hearing the voices of Villeroy and Charles conversing in an under tone. She seated herself by the fire, and cast her eyes round the room to see if her writing desk had been deposited there, for she also wished to write to her mother.

But though she perceived the desk close to her, she felt such an extraordinary oppression at her heart, as completely to incapacitate her from exertion. Her tears burst forth irresistibly, and she felt, what she had never before experienced, a species of self-condemnation, a sensation

that brought with it a degree of irritation and restless misery, which disturbed the tranquillity of hopeless resignation.

She found that the idea of Clifford would intrude itself on her mind. If she shut her eyes he seemed to stand before her, and the murmur of his voice had an effect on her heart that inspired the strongest resentment against herself, while she still endeavoured ineffectually to fix her thoughts on Clarence.

She assembled all the little relics and tender remembrancers she had preserved of him, and washed them with her tears, while she pressed them to her lips with unusual fervour.

But unspeakable was her dismay, when she discovered, that though she was still holding the precious memorials to her lips, her imagination had wandered to the

image of Charles, as he had appeared on entering the saloon that evening.

Shocked and distressed beyond measure, she started up and restored the sacred relics to the place from whence she had taken them. They had failed to awaken the feelings she was anxious to arouse within her breast, and she paced the room with agitated steps, and the strongest disturbance of mind. She greatly lamented that she had not a picture of Clarence, for he had deferred presenting her with his resemblance, till he could have it executed by an eminent artist in town.

“ Oh, my injured, my cruelly injured Clarence!” whispered she; “ oh that I possessed a resemblance of thy heavenly countenance that should “ speak daggers” to my unfeeling heart, and arouse my wayward and unworthy nature to a

sense of thy wrongs! My poor Clarence! new is thy early grave, my Clarence. Scarce have two moons yet shone upon it, nor has thy lovely form yet mouldered to its native clay, and yet thy worthless, cruel, oh! most wretched wife! could press the dear memorials of thy tenderness to her unhallowed lips, and even in that very moment think upon another! Oh, Clarence! that thy cold arms at this instant embraced me! oh! that one grave contained us both, then should I not have lived to feel myself a wretch, faithless, unnatural! devoid of the common feelings of humanity!"

In agony indescribable she retired to her bed, hoping to lose in sleep the sense of her misery; but her perturbation would not admit of composed slumbers; she was continually starting from momentary oblivion, rendered horrible by appalling dreams, and the waking moment was succeeded by the most painful sensation, oc-

casioned by the consciousness that the first object which presented itself to her imagination was Charles Clifford!

Augusta knew that it was not Mrs. Pelham's intention to remain in Paris more than a few days, but as Villeroy had assured them he would continue their escort till he saw them comfortably settled in the place they should select for their winter residence, she entertained strong apprehensions that Charles would also be one of their party.

To this she had the strongest objection, and felt that there would be a degree of impropriety in having him in their train.

She was sure her mother would not approve of it, and every one that had known of the intimacy that had once existed between them would think it extremely indelicate, as well as imprudent

that he should be admitted on so familiar a footing into a party of which she formed a member in this early stage of her widowhood.

She felt the strongest dread of the inference which might naturally be drawn, and she resolved not to expose herself to a censure, which would appear so well merited, and above all to the censure of her own heart, which, upon such an occasion, could not fail to condemn her.

No, Charles Clifford should not be of their party at present, she was resolved upon it. She would speak to Villeroy upon the subject; he, she was fully convinced, was firmly attached to Virginia; she did not conceive it possible that Charles could have made him his confidant respecting the particulars of his acquaintance with himself, as Villeroy's own brother had been his rival, she therefore concluded that he was en-

tirely ignorant of every thing connected with the subject, and she proposed to mention to him, as her opinion, that it would not be strictly proper that so young and handsome a man as Mr. Clifford should be permitted to form part of their escort, as he was in no way related or connected with them; that she should feel the constant presence of a person of that description a great constraint in her present temper of mind—that her melancholy, and Mrs. Pelham's whimsicalities, would make it extremely unpleasant to him—in short, that she could not feel comfortable with such an addition to the party.

She thought Villeroy would understand her as she wished, and conclude that she would have entertained the same scruples in regard to any other handsome young man, being admitted to their society under the present circumstances.

She determined to breakfast in her own chamber, and request to speak to Villeroy in the anti-room directly after.

While she was at her toilet Virginia came to her, and informed her, that Mrs. Pelham did not intend appearing at breakfast; and on finding that such also was Augusta's intention, Virginia proposed remaining with her.

Augusta perceived that her friend's looks were less complacent than usual, and on enquiring into the cause, Virginia said she was much disappointed, as she had hoped Mrs. Pelham would have continued a sufficient time in Paris to have allowed them to inspect its chief curiosities; but, on the contrary, she had suddenly resolved on leaving it that very day.

She had called up her maid and Virginia in the middle of the night, declaring that she smelt smoke so strong, that she was convinced that the house was on fire.

It was long before they could persuade her she was mistaken, when she protested that it must be the smoaky atmosphere that predominated, and which so much affected her, that she was certain she should not survive three days if compelled to remain in Paris—in short, she was resolved not to sleep another night there. Orders were therefore given for their departure, and a message sent to Colonel Villeroy, to inform him that they must set off as soon as possible after breakfast.

“You astonish me,” cried Augusta, after listening to this communication from her friend; “I thought we were to re-

main here three or four days at least—however, I cannot say I regret it, for I acknowledge I have felt more than usually miserable for the few hours I have been here.”

Augusta now fell in a fit of musing; she dreaded lest Charles might be making arrangements to accompany them, and she was most anxious to speak to Villeroy immediately.

At length she suddenly exclaimed—

“I had something I wished to have said to Villeroy before I left Paris, I am afraid I shall not now have an opportunity.”

“How?” cried Virginia, with quickness, and in an apprehensive tone; “does he not accompany us?”

“ Yes, oh yes, certainly—but——”

“ Oh, perhaps you have some commission you wish him to execute for you before we leave Paris?” said Virginia, greatly relieved; “ shall I tell him, or will you speak to him yourself?”

“ I think I hear his voice in the next room now. Do, my dear Virginia, go, and ask him in a whisper to come for a moment into the anti-room.”

Virginia with alacrity obeyed her friend's request, and returned, followed by Villeroy to the anti-room, where she left him with Augusta, who with some agitation addressed him thus—

“ My dear brother, I fear—I am apprehensive—I don't think it would be exactly right, or proper——”

She hesitated—a deep glow suffused her face, and being at a loss how to express herself and overwhelmed with a dread that Villeroy would suspect her real sentiment, she burst into uncontrollable tears.

With the greatest tenderness he endeavoured to sooth her agitation, the source of which he began to suspect.

“ I am not very well to-day,” said Augusta, a little recovering herself, “ I am more than usually weak and foolish ; but the presence of a stranger, in my present state of mind, is so oppressive to me, that I feel quite wretched at the idea, that your friend may perhaps meditate joining our party ; and, indeed, really at this time I do not think it would be strictly proper, as he is no way related to us, and is so very young a man, and one whom people might think

agreeable, that is, attractive, at least good looking."

Augusta spoke with such rapidity that Villeroy was unable to interrupt her, otherwise she might have spared herself the disagreeable task of saying so much upon this subject; for, as soon as she would allow him to speak, he said, kindly taking her hand—

"I approve the delicacy and propriety of your ideas, but you have no cause for uneasiness on this head.—Charles will remain in Paris till I rejoin him, which I shall do as soon as I have seen you comfortably settled for the winter."

Augusta gratefully grasped his hand, and hurried from him to conceal the emotion, which, had he witnessed it,

could not more fully have informed him of the real state of her heart, than had her previous words and whole demeanour.

CHAP. XXIV.



Be hush'd my dark spirit, for wisdom condemns
When the faint and the feeble deplore;
Be strong as the rock of the ocean that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore.

CAMPBELL.

VILLEROY was now convinced that Augusta had once loved Charles; his lively penetration dived into the whole

nature of her feelings, and much was he tempted to believe her hasty marriage with his brother had been the effect of picque, and that the dutiful and tender attention she had paid him, was the result of sound principle rather than of affection, and that her grief was the grief of a heart of sensibility, which felt sorrow for the untimely fate of a being who had loved her, rather than the effusions of sincere regret for the loss she had herself sustained.

He pitied her for what she must have suffered in the punctilious discharge of her duty in opposition to her inclinations, and admired and respected her for the delicacy of her sentiments, which his own refined nature could so well understand.

That some degree of impropriety would attach to Clifford's continuing with them had suggested itself to his mind previous

to this intimation from Augusta, and had led him on the preceding evening, when left alone with Charles, to direct the conversation to that point.

He perceived, after the ladies had quitted them, that Charles was lost in thought, and he could well conceive the nature of his reverie, and knew it related to a subject which he could not possibly converse on with any degree of delicacy at the present juncture, and to refer to it, by distant allusions, was the utmost stretch that propriety could admit of.

Villeroy at length broke the long silence, which by the way is not very usual when two real friends meet after an absence of some weeks.

But Charles was too much engaged with the present to think of the past; and had his ideas reverted to the occur-

rences that had taken place while Villeroi was away, he would not probably have felt much inclination to relate them.

Villeroi, on his part, was also occupied with the present, which he wished to conduct in such a manner, as to prevent its throwing a shade upon the future.

In order to open the subject, he observed—

“ Poor Mrs. Pelham is certainly a most wearying companion, she would try the temper of the gentlest of human beings, nor do I think any persons but the two amiable women, who are her companions, could support her whimsicalities with such patience.

“ Yesterday at dinner she alarmed us all extremely, by suddenly screaming out repeatedly. I was just in the act of se-

parating the head of a pheasant with two forks, in order to get at the brains, little imagining the cause of her horror, when, in the most supplicating accents, she implored me to desist, unless I wanted to kill her, for that she felt exactly such a sensation in her skull, as she should suppose the incision of the two forks would inflict; and a few days ago we were obliged to send an excellent dish of broiled kidneys from the table, for she declared, that while it continued before her, her own kidneys felt exactly as if they were peppered and broiled. It was with the utmost difficulty I could resist laughing outright at this absurdity, but politeness, indeed I should say, humanity, restrained me, for certainly these follies are most pitiable."

Charles could not forbear laughing, albeit, not much inclined to mirth. Colonel Villeroy continued—"Mrs. Pelham sometimes talks of wintering at Montpe-

lier, but I am sure she will be tired of travelling before she has half performed such an immense journey, at a time of the year too so very unfavourable. I have endeavoured to persuade her to repair to Bourges, or Moulin, or some of the towns in that department, which are sufficiently south to escape the rigour of winter; she sometimes says she will take my advice, and I think she will. I have promised to see her settled, when I shall immediately return to Paris to re-join you. I do not propose your being of a party, which could not possibly give you any pleasure, as Mrs. Pelham's oddities, and Augusta's melancholy would effectually prevent your enjoying yourself. And no advantage is to be gained while travelling with Mrs. Pelham; for as she is entirely guided by caprice, she will often pass places which contain objects the most worthy of inspection, without allowing us time even to make cu-

quiries respecting them; and again, she will remain two or three days at a miserable pot house by the road side, where we are obliged to put up with every inconvenience, till she thinks herself sufficiently recovered to proceed on her journey. Under these circumstances, my dear Charles," continued Villeroy, "I think you will find it most agreeable to remain here till I rejoin you."

Charles looked much dissatisfied, and after a few moments silence, said—"I have found it very disagreeable heretofore; I am almost tired of myself as a companion."

"But I hope," returned Villeroy, "you will not find it so for the future. There are several young Englishmen of condition now in Paris, whom I know intimately—I will leave you letters of introduction to them, and you must find them

out. Get into the ambassador's circle, which you will through them, and you will not find Paris disagreeable."

"I don't wish for society, my temper of mind and habits of life unfit me for it."

"How? I thought you said you were weary of your own company?"

"So I am—but I should be still more weary of the insipid and uninteresting round of a large promiscuous society. I remember I never in my life felt time hang so heavy upon me, or found existence so thoroughly tasteless, as when I used nightly to frequent the monotonous crowds into which your poor brother introduced me in London. My intellects were absolutely useless to me—I might just as well have been without them, they were never called into action, and I really believe if I had continued that way

of life, they would have sunk into a state of torpor bordering upon idiotism. When you admitted me into your select circle, I was aroused from this lethargic stupor—and never again will I waste my time, and abuse my understanding, by exposing it to these soporific attacks.”

“ I perfectly approve of your determination,” said Villeroy ; “ but I would not have you abjure society entirely—there is no occasion for you to rush into indiscriminate crowds; that may be called dissipation, but undoubtedly it is not the way to dissipate your ideas, and withdraw them from the sources of uneasiness that may oppress your mind; for, as you justly observe, there is not the smallest necessity for mental exertion in such assemblies. You may, if you please, indulge the most profound reverie, it will probably never be noticed, nor will it be deemed ill bred to betray the most entire abstraction, as you are

not particularly called on to exert yourself for the entertainment of any individual present. But the society of a few chosen friends, amongst whom you excite an interest, and where you are in a manner compelled to exert yourself, is the specific for a dejected heart, the mind's stimulus, and a refuge from one's self. I speak from experience, Charles—choice society is the balm of life, but an indiscriminate *mélange* is the very parent of *ennui*. It is most extraordinary, that though this seems to be a received opinion, people in general take a most unaccountable pride in crowding their rooms almost to a pitch of suffocation; and to inconvenience, instead of entertaining the guests, seems to be the chief object of this assemblage. The only motive to which I can ascribe this, is to a ridiculous ostentation of displaying the extensiveness of your acquaintance; and no ambition can be more absurd, as it obviously betrays an indiscriminate taste;

for we all know that choice associates are by no means easy to be found, and therefore when we see such immense crouds huddled together, we may be quite sure that, on a moderate computation, three fourths of them are persons whose acquaintance could not possibly be conceived an acquisition, and would be rejected by all sensible people. But those to whom I would introduce you, Charles, are by no means of that description; they would not permit your intellects to go to sleep, but make it their business to point out to you all that is worthy of inspection in this capital, which, I believe, can boast sufficient to engage your attention, and entertain your mind, even if you had resolved on spending as many years here as we once proposed spending weeks."

Villeroy paused, but Charles did not seem inclined to speak, and his friend added—"It will not be long before I rejoin you, and I assure you I anticipate

extremely the gratification I expect to derive from my *séjour à Paris*."

Villeroy perceived very plainly that Charles was by no means pleased at his being excluded from the travelling party, notwithstanding he had given him such an unfavourable picture of it; but he was pretty certain that Charles must be sensible of the real motive that prevented his requesting him to join him, and would upon reflexion feel conscious that he could derive no pleasure from Augusta's society at present.

The ensuing morning, when Charles was made acquainted with Mrs. Pelham's resolution of immediately leaving Paris, he was still more discontented; but as his feelings were not of a nature which he could give utterance to, a gloomy silence and disturbed aspect alone bespoke them.

During breakfast Villeroy scribbled two hurried letters to two gentlemen, the sons of noblemen whom he knew to be at Paris. They were friends of his—it is therefore needless to add, that they were such persons as could not fail to prove agreeable to Charles, who he recommended to them in strong terms.

Having finished these two letters Villeroy delivered them to Charles, telling him that he would learn the residence of those gentlemen, on enquiring for them at the hotel of the English ambassador, of whose suite they formed a part.

Charles put the letters into his pocket, muttering something about their being of very little use to him, that he should probably never deliver them. Villeroy took no notice of what he said, he perceived that his feelings were in a state of irritation, and that he wanted to be an-

gry with somebody, and experienced a degree of satisfaction in rejecting all kindness, and indulging his spleen, tho' at the expence of his friend.

Villeroy entertained a brotherly affection for him, and that sentiment had increased, since the only being, who had a natural claim to that portion of his regard, had been torn from him. He loved to consider Charles as a substitute for his lost Clarence, he felt a degree of tenderness soften his heart towards him—there was a vacuum in it that wanted to be occupied, which Charles was capable of filling. Villeroy received him into it, and submitted to his perverseness with a smile of affection, feeling a pleasure in indulging his caprices, for he knew that Charles in his heart nourished the most enthusiastic friendship for him, and that he was worthy of a reciprocal regard.

All that Clifford again saw of Augusta

was in handing her to the carriage at the door of which he was standing to bid them farewell ; she wished him good morning with a polite but reserved air, and was soon with the rest of the party transported from his sight.

CHAP. XXV.



No, the wild bliss of nature needs alloy,
And fear and ardour fan the fire of joy !
And say without our hopes, without our fears,
Without the home that plighted love endears,
Without the smile from partial beauty won,
Oh ! what were man ? a world without a sun !

CAMPBELL.

NEVER was Alfieri (whom I cannot yet get out of my head) in his very worst paroxysm of despair and *ennui*, more a

prey to those delirious demons, than was Charles when again left to himself, solitary and deserted in his apartments at the hotel, and the same extraordinary expedient that the Italian resorted to, to keep himself from his mistress, that of being lashed with strong cords in his elbow chair, was almost requisite to keep Charles from following the wheels of Mrs. Pelham's carriage. Yet he felt a species of satisfaction when he again took possession of his chamber, and derived some consolation in caressing a handkerchief that Augusta had accidentally left behind her, and in reflecting that her presence had hallowed the apartment. But he was too sulky for several days to take any steps towards finding out the gentlemen to whom his recommendatory letters were addressed. He beheld every object with disgust, and contemplated every thing in the darkest colours. He had been unable to discover the slightest appearance of even the most slender re-

mains of that interest he believed Augusta had once felt for him. Her countenance had undergone no change on beholding him, that he had perceived, nor had any degree of agitation marked her manner. He conceived himself completely an alien from her heart, and that there remained not the most distant chance of his ever regaining the place he had forfeited in it. He was reduced to a state of despondency, and fancied there was nothing now which he should so much like as spending the remainder of his days in a monastery. He even believed that he regretted the faith he professed would not permit him to become a member of a holy fraternity, though I rather suspect, that had he been compelled to adopt such a mode of life, he would have selected for his asylum a similar school for mortification to that of the monastery of Erback, in Germany, where (according to Bigland) the monks live in the most splendid and luxurious

style, keep a pack of hounds, choice hunters, and an excellent band of musicians, enjoy all the pleasures of hospitality, and all the delights that the beautiful district of Rhingau can afford.

We will leave poor Charles a prey to vain regrets, and incessant, though fruitless repentance, for the folly and empty ambition that had first led him into error, and which was the original cause of all his sufferings and mortification; and while he is nursing his misery in his grand but gloomy suite of apartments, we will follow the travellers, who, I am sorry to say, were not quite so distinguishable for their extraordinary harmony, as "*The Travellers*," who charmed our oral faculties some years ago within the echoing walls of Covent-Garden. The *dolce* of Mrs. Pelham's disposition could not certainly bear a comparison with the *dolce* of Braham's voice, though she could most pathetically have exclaim-

ed, "Dear is my life!" But Villeroy might most justly have addressed the concluding line to Virginia, and have pronounced with pathos—"But, sister, ah! dear sister! beware, beware of love!"

Mrs. Mountain's affectuoso would have suited Augusta, and she might have warbled, "My husband dead was found!" But, alas! the living asserted more imposing claims to her imagination, and with very little ceremony were most inhumanly pushing out the dead, consigning their memories, as well as their bodies, to the destructive influence of time. She could not recover the revulsion her system had undergone during the few hours she had continued at Paris, and could in no way effect a reconciliation with herself. She regretted unceasingly her having consented to come abroad, and longed for nothing so much as the society of her mother within the peace-

ful walls she had quitted with such reluctance.

Every circumstance seemed now to combine to encrease the disagreeable of the journey; the weather suddenly changed; the long duration of clear sunshine, which had enlivened the days, was succeeded by heavy rains, that gave an aspect of excessive dreariness to every object they beheld. The miserable towns they passed through looked additionally wretched from being half inundated, and the dark, gloomy, dirty *auberges* could be compared to nothing but damp, green dungeons. The roads were intolerable, the postillions inflexible, and no rhetoric could prevail upon them not to drive over the very worst part, which they seemed continually to make choice of, even when a less rugged track presented itself, and offered relief to the fatigued party from the incessant jumbling over the hard paved roads, which, for want of

repair, discovered a hole at almost every turn, to receive the rickety wheel, rendered infirm by repeated concussions.

Mrs. Pelham found a new source of misery in apprehensions for her elegant English carriage, and also in her fears that it might not be sufficiently strong to support such uncommon attacks. The springs had been strengthened (as is the custom) on their first setting off from Calais, by having cords twisted round them. Added to all these sources of annoyance, the postillions were continually stopping to repair the ropes with which their miserable cattle were harnessed, and which were as continually breaking, or giving way. They now seldom advanced more than three miles an hour, and when they stopped for the night, the wretched accommodation, which was yet the best that could with difficulty be procured, and the entire absence of comfort, convenience, and clean-

liness, whenever they put up, rendered Mrs. Pelham and Augusta completely sick of the journey. As to Virginia and Villeroy, they would have preferred continuing it, under all its disadvantages, to being separated from each other. They therefore with deep regret heard Mrs. Pelham announce her determination of taking up her abode for the winter at the very first decent town they came to, observing, at the same time, that to continue the journey under such circumstances, and in such weather, would inevitably be the death of her. This assertion had more of reason in it than those of a similar tendency, Mrs. Pelham was so often in the habit of making; for certainly travelling in the month of December, and often sleeping in damp, and of course unhealthy rooms, was a very probable means of effecting a termination to all her sufferings. She had in reality now caught a very severe cold, and was much more an invalid than she had often

been when fancying herself almost at the point of death. Not that I mean to say she made light of this, for, on the contrary, it formed the entire subject of her thoughts and conversation; but she had frequently talked as much of her indisposition when it could not be perceived that she laboured under any particular ailment.

They were now in the department of Cher, formerly the province of Berri, and were very near Bourges, which Mrs. Pelham resolved should terminate their journey, at least for the present.—Bourges was originally in the centre of France, but as it is now scarcely possible to say how far the French territories extend, or where they terminate, it would be difficult to form a correct judgment of what may now be the center of the Usurper's dominions.

Bourges is an extensive, ancient, and

gloomy town; but here Mrs. Pelham resolved upon continuing, and immediately on their arrival, Villeroy, accompanied by Augusta and Virginia, walked out (the weather being then fair) in quest of a commodious, ready furnished house, which might be had to hire. But this was by no means easy to be met with; and, after a long and tedious search, the only place that could be found was an old wandering hotel, five times as large as they had any occasion for. (It is, perhaps, necessary here to observe, that the principal houses in France, when enclosed within a court, are termed hotels; and this appellation is not exclusively attached to a house of public resort.) It was scantily furnished with things that looked as if they had been thrown out of the ark to lighten it—these were scattered through innumerable gloomy apartments, most of them having an anti-room attached. The saloon, which was very

extensive, was not quite so empty as the other rooms, being lined with a double row of armed chairs, with crimson velvet cushions, and the legs and arms gilded. There were also marble slabs with gilt supporters, and several very handsome pier glasses. The walls were covered with tapestry, which had once been handsome, but was now much injured by damp. With all this, the chimney-place resembled both in fashion and extent that of an English farm-house kitchen, and there was nothing in it but a pair of dogs, on which to burn wood. Not a carpet, or window curtain, was to be seen; and there appeared the heterogenous medley of magnificence, with the most comfortless scarcity of common necessities. Yet this saloon, such as I have represented it, is a faithful picture of the *salle a compagnie*, or drawing-room, in almost every French house in the provinces; and I much doubt if they are greatly superior,

even within the precincts of the metropolis, with a very few exceptions.

The Gallic atmosphere is certainly fatal to the existence of comfort, for I never yet heard of any body encountering it on that side the channel—indeed, I question whether it be not indigenous to Britain. This idea could scarcely fail of suggesting itself to our trio, as they traversed the desolate apartments of the *hotel de la mort*. It was enclosed within high walls, from which large wooden folding gates, sufficiently wide to admit a carriage, opened into a narrow street, rendered almost dark by the near approximation of the lofty houses that formed it. A gutter ran through the middle of it, and such was the approach to the hotel, which was considered as one of the first houses in the place. It had been the residence of a French nobleman, who had emigrated in the time of the re-

volution, but was now returned to his country, and living at Paris, having formed the resolution never again to visit the *hotel de la mort*, which he held in abhorrence, from the circumstance of one of the heads of his family having been guillotined in the court-yard belonging to it, during the time of terror.

This execution, with other particulars, was related to Villeroy and his companions by the person who had the letting of the hotel, and it must be confessed it did not tend to diminish the melancholy sensation with which they contemplated it; but no choice was offered them, and they agreed to keep this circumstance a secret from Mrs. Pelham, whose enervated mind was susceptible of the most vague and unreasonable impressions.

Villeroy was anxious that they should remain at Bourges, in preference to their

proceeding farther into the country, which he thought was by no means in a settled state, and was apprehensive they might find some difficulty in getting back to England, should a war be precipitately resorted to.

CHAP. XXVI.



How shall I cheat the heavy hours, of thee
Depriv'd, of thy kind looks and converse sweet,
Now that the waving grove the dark storms beat,
And wint'ry winds, sad sounding o'er the lea,
Scatter the fallow leaf?

BOWLES.

THEY now returned to the auberge,
accompanied by Monsieur Le Gueux,
(a procureur in the town, in whose charge

the hotel had been left), and acquainted Mrs. Pelham with the result of their researches. She being completely weary of inns, and the miserable accommodation she was compelled to put up with in such places, instantly closed the bargain, complying with all Monsieur Le Gueux's demands, who, finding that she was anxious to get possession of the house, became proportionably exorbitant in his terms. He pretended that it was out of his power to let the house for a less time than a year certain, nor would he accept any thing less than eight guineas a month, an enormous rent in that country. All this Mrs. Pelham, with very little opposition, consented to. She conceived she should in all probability want the house for half that time, for it was at present her intention to continue her journey the ensuing summer. "But it is of no consequence," said she, "I can let it when I am tired of it, I dare say, so I will take possession of it to-day." So it was ar-

ranged, and she paid a month's rent in advance.

Villeroy suggested the impropriety of Mrs. Pelham's taking up her abode at the hotel, which had so long been uninhabited before it was properly aired; and after much persuasion, she was prevailed upon to continue where she was till the next day—and her man and maid were dispatched to prepare the hotel, and to make enquiries for and hire as many French servants as were required to complete a temporary establishment.

But Mrs. Hervey (the maid) soon returned with a very discontented face, to inform her mistress that there was not a single article of kitchen furniture in the house, except chairs and tables, and a few *casseroles* eaten in with verdigrease—nor was there any crockery at all. What was to be done? Monsieur Le Gueux was sent for, and interrogated.

It was not customary, he informed them, to furnish these articles, which had long since been removed from the hotel, but there were shops in the town which could supply them immediately.

With the same ease did Monsieur Le Gueux suggest a mode of making up the deficiency, when a complaint was made that there was scarcely a blanket to be found, or at most one to two beds. These too in all probability he had thought it expedient to remove; but it was impossible to do without them, and it cost Mrs. Pelham near thirty pounds before the hotel could be made habitable, and to all the remonstrances made him on the subject, Monsieur Le Gueux only replied with perfect *nonchalance*, "I did not know that was missing, I cannot think what has become of it, but it can be bought in the town for a trifle."

Villeroy, out of all patience with him,

gave him a very severe reprimand, and plainly told him what he thought of him, but he could not provoke him to the slightest degree of resentment, he took every thing in good part, and never offered any more in extenuation of his conduct, than “I did not know that that was missing”—but neither threats nor invectives could induce him to supply the smallest deficiency.

It was nearly a week, instead of a day, before Mrs. Pelham could take possession of her new abode. Meantime she had the comfort of being constantly attended by a French physician, who she had summoned to attend her the very day after her arrival. She was provided with a carpet, which she had been apprised, prior to her coming abroad, she would rarely meet with in the course of her travels. This she had had laid down at all the inns where she had remained any time, and it now served to cover a small

space before the fire in the saloon, tho' by far the greater part of the spacious floor presented bare boards to the chilled aspect.

With a deep sigh Villeroy heard Mrs. Pelham say he was settled for some time the weather had been very mild since she had been at Bourges, she therefore asserted that the climate was delightful, and that she already felt herself considerably better, and had the highest opinion of the medical man who attended her, as he had immediately understood all her complaints, and had daily sent her a quantity of medicine, from which she derived the greatest benefit.

Now then Villeroy's presence was no longer necessary. This idea had for some days borne heavy on his heart, but not heavier than it did on Virginia's.

Augusta too was sensible of keen re

regret at the thoughts of parting with one whom she loved as a tender brother, and who had amply performed the duties incumbent on that character by gently solacing her affliction ; she was convinced too that a mutual attachment existed between him and Virginia, and as she was now perfectly acquainted with the circumstances of his family, she was not at a loss to understand the reason of his silence in regard to his sentiments.

It was now that Villeroy felt what additional misery Mrs. Pelham's caprice of coming abroad had entailed upon him, for to part with Virginia now that he had so long enjoyed her society, and been with her on the familiar footing of a brother, was ten thousand times more painful than it would have been to have left her, as he had resolved to do, in Yorkshire, at a period when their mutual behaviour had for some time been marked by the most irksome restraint, and pain ra-

ther than pleasure had been the fruits of their intercourse. Now he felt her society more than ever essential to his happiness. He scarcely doubted that he was beloved, nor did he believe it possible Virginia could fail to read his heart. But could he solicit her to share his broken fortunes, and taking advantage of her disinterested affection, plunge her into all the difficulties and humiliations attendant upon poverty? Such conduct would be selfish to the last degree, and must be productive of misery to both. He tried to wish that time might weave a film of oblivion over her ill-fated attachment; that she would cease gradually to think of him, and ultimately enjoy that happiness with another, which he was forbade to offer her.

But what anguish did the indulgence of this suggestion cost him, feeling, as he did, that Virginia never could be superseded in his heart, and that though

the duty he owed society, his family, and himself, demanded that he should make every exertion to overcome this weakness, he never could so far get the better of it, as to permit him with honour to unite himself to another, however desirable, from interested motives, such a union might be. He was to correspond with Augusta, and he made her promise, if Mrs. Pelham's complaint should really assume a serious aspect, so as to endanger her life, to give him immediate notice of it, as in case of any thing happening to her, he would hasten to them, nor quit them till they were once more safe under the protection of their friends in England. On him too they were to rely for the earliest information respecting any change in the political world, which might render it expedient for them to leave the country without delay.

There were few things, independant of her own personal feelings, that could

have annoyed Mrs. Pelham more than the circumstance of Villeroy's departure —on him she had wholly rested for arranging every little difficulty that naturally occurs on a journey, she looked to him with entire confidence, and entertained the highest opinion of his understanding and judgment; he had uniformly conducted himself with such kindness and respectful attention towards her, even in her most fantastic humours, that she had for ever secured her regard, and he ranked next to Virginia in her affections. She had several times hinted her wishes that he would continue with them, but he excused himself upon the plea of his promise to rejoin his friend Clifford, who he considered in some measure in his charge, as being the ward of his father.

The day prior to Villeroy's departure a very sensible change took place in the weather, which turned extremely cold.

This equally surprised and incommoded Mrs. Pelham, who had taken it into her head she would never experience the influence of winter in this more southern district. The grand saloon was actually not habitable; a wind almost sufficient to turn a mill blew in through the crevices of the doors and windows: the latter could never withstand a hard shower, and the water was soon perceived overflowing that quarter of the apartment beneath them. The smoke, instead of following its ordinary direction, came straight forward into the room, owing to the influence of a particular wind, and the individuals assembled were glad to make a precipitate retreat to their chambers, while the carpet, chairs, &c. were removed to a smaller and less comfortless sitting room, to which, however, it was necessary to transport the furniture, it being otherwise empty.

Mrs. Pelham was extremely discom-

posed by this occurrence, and she began to think of the comforts of the house she had voluntarily banished herself from; and when she joined Villeroy, Virginia, and Augusta in the parlour, which was now prepared for their accommodation, she was more than usually querulous and discontented; and her vexation was increased by the prospect of Villeroy's departure on the morrow.

Virginia, who would have been unhappy anywhere in his absence, felt additionally wretched at his leaving her in such a melancholy place, her eyes were continually filling with tears, and scarcely could she retain a semblance of composure. She was satisfied that he loved her, though he had never formally declared his passion; yet she could not doubt it, and having been informed by Augusta of his family circumstances, she too could well divine the cause of his silence, on a subject she felt convinced

was as productive of uneasiness to him as it was to her.

Augusta fully participated in the feelings of both, and she and Virginia equally wished themselves at home, where, in the bosoms of tender parents, they might have reposed all their sorrows.

Villeroy was unable to enliven their spirits, for he himself felt completely oppressed, and an unconquerable weight of dejection hung upon them all. This was not diminished, when Mrs. Pelham, prior to retiring for the night, which she did very early, took a most affecting leave of Villeroy, who was to set off at day break, and who she did not therefore expect to see again. She had been replunged into one of her most desponding fits by the change of the weather and other local circumstances, and she took leave of Villeroy with all the awful solemnity of a dying person, professing herself con-

vinced that she should never see him again. She expressed her gratitude for his undeviating attention, and the solicitude with which he had studied to lighten her sufferings, and said she should never forget his indulgence to her infirmities, particularly in the instance when he had with such perfect good humour sent a dish of broiled kidneys from the table, which she was convinced he was remarkably fond of.

This allusion to the broiled kidneys gave a slight turn to the sensations of those present, perfectly foreign to the nature of their feelings at this time; but the effect subsided almost as soon as it was felt, and the *sombreness* of the scene continued uninterrupted.

It was some hours after Mrs. Pelham retired, before Villeroy could summon resolution to bid his two beloved companions farewell, while every moment that

he lingered rendered the parting more painful.

"All charms must vanish when we hope no more,
The short-liv'd pleasure we shall soon deplore."

At length with speechless motion he embraced them both, and hurried out of the room; but they, anxious to see him, while it was yet possible, followed him to the door that opened into the dreary court; a faint moon-light rendered its desolation visible. Villeroy cast a lingering look behind, he beheld the two white figures standing under the colonade; he flew back—he grasped their hands—pressed them with convulsive fervour to his lips—again darted across the court, when the melancholy wooden gates closed upon him, and wretched vacancy alone remained in the spot, his beloved form had the moment before occupied. For a few moments Virginia gazed on the high and gloomy walls that seemed to separate her from all she loved. Then

her eyes wandered round the grass grown court that had once been the scene of barbarity, and stained with innocent blood. She shuddered almost to an hysterical degree, and throwing herself on the bosom of Augusta, she burst into a paroxysm of anguish.

Augusta's tears flowed no less copiously.

CHAP. XXVII.



Now summer the season of pleasure is past,
And the rain it beats hard, and the leaves they fall fast.
And sad in the covert I linger alone,
For the friend of my heart he is far away gone.
Return pleasant Spring! Oh hasten again,
With the smile of thy sunbeam to gladden the plain,
But thy smile shall be vain, and thy aspect be drear,
And thy music, oh Spring! will sound sad in mine ear,
And all thy green buds I with sorrow shall see,
If the friend of my bosom return not with thee!

BOWLES.

NO two unhappy exiles, torn from all
they most loved, and doomed to a life of

banishment in the dreary region of Ischim, could feel more completely deserted, desolate, and miserable than did Virginia and Augusta, as supporting each other they returned into the partially inhabited mansion, and, after traversing a dozen rooms entirely empty, reached the chamber, which they together occupied next Mrs. Pelham's. Virginia felt it impossible to check her tears, and Augusta was glad of an excuse for permitting her's to flow also ; but after a short time she forced herself to attempt the duties of friendship, and endeavoured to solace Virginia by talking of Villeroy, and suggesting the probability that a change in public affairs might bring him speedily back to them, observing, that she was convinced he would fly to them the moment he supposed any danger might threaten them, and that she doubted not, at any rate, that he would rejoin them in the spring, when they should all pursue their journey together. This Augusta

did not in reality think probable, for she believed that Villeroy was conscious his peace depended on his avoiding the society of Virginia, but any thing which could at this moment prove consolatory to her friend, she eagerly resorted to. Thus Virginia was talked into some degree of composure; the certainty too that Augusta would hear frequently from Villeroy was a lively source of consolation. But she thought she should feel more comfortable when convinced that he had actually quitted the town, than while she knew him to be still so near, yet was certain she should see him no more. She had already (as is invariably the case on such occasions) recollected several things she wished to have said to him prior to his departure, but which had not suggested themselves until he was gone. In her present temper of mind all reserve in her conversation with Augusta was banished; and, talking of Villeroy, it was natural to allude in some

way to Clifford, whom he was now about to rejoin; she wondered if they would still occupy the same apartments at Paris, and Augusta now for the first time learnt that himself and friends had been indebted to Charles's courtesy for their accommodations at the hotel at Paris, and that the room she had slept in was the one Charles himself usually occupied. Virginia had learnt these particulars from Villeroy. Augusta wished her friend would not talk at all of Charles Clifford, she affected drowsiness, and Virginia became silent, but restless and disturbed were their slumbers for this night, and they arose from their uneasy pillows dejected and unrefreshed.—Mrs. Pelham sent for them to breakfast with her in her dressing room; she appeared very much discomposed, and out of humour, declared she had not had a wink of sleep all night, and that she was as cold as ever she had been in England.—Augusta observed that it froze a little, but by no means severely.

“ Severely,” repeated Mrs. Pelham ;
“ I am sure I never was so uncomfortable in my life ; the windows rattled so all night, it would have been impossible to have slept had I been ever so inclined ; and that French doctor has given me some stuff that has made me ten times worse. I thought the fellow understood my disorder, but I find he is totally ignorant of it. I have such a weakness in my spinal marrow to-day, I can hardly stand upright. My dear, stir that wretched fire, there is no making it burn ; those miserable French coals give not the least heat, and I cannot support the smell of wood. Poor Colonel Villeroy, I am sure he will be froze travelling in such weather. I don’t know what we shall do without him in this horrible old barn.”—
Mrs. Pelham continued grumbling and complaining, while her auditors listened in silence, or rather gave their thoughts *wing*, which were frequently in the habit of making very extensive excursions,

while Mrs. Pelham was holding forth on her inexhaustible theme.—She went on. “This sharp air will be the death of me, it has affected my whole system already. See how my little finger sticks out as I am stirring my tea. See, I can’t help it, it *will* stick out do what I will to prevent it. It is a nervous affection, it never did so in England. Oh that I should have come this immense journey to be worse than ever. I am sure there is a universal relaxation in my sinews, my leg feels just as if it would draw out the whole length of the room. Oh! that wretched French quack! how could I be so mistaken in him; but I will try some other I am resolved—there are two or three apothecaries in the town they tell me—I will send Hervey for them all, and see what sort of people they are.”

This day wore away most heavily; the friends were well aware that idleness and inaction were not specifics for low spirits,

they therefore endeavoured to occupy themselves ; reading, writing, and drawing were all resorted to by turns, but they failed of the desired effect of engaging their attention.—A large wandering garden extended at the back of the hotel ; it was marshy and over-run with weeds ; a walk, bounded by yew trees, conducted to a stone basin full of green stagnate water. Several headless statues (like emblems of the guillotine) were lying prostrate in different directions, having been knocked from their pedestals. A lofty wall enclosed this *pleasure* ground, concealing it even from the rays of the sun, excepting for a short time each day. In this yew tree walk our young friends sometimes took a few turns, for they were not in spirits to explore the environs of the town, to discover a more desirable promenade. Indeed Mrs. Pelham thought it unkind, if they continued long absent, and long they never remained in the yew tree walk, for the

melancholy moaning that the least wind always makes through that description of tree, and, in this case, so thoroughly in unison with the desolation around, generally drove them in with an additional weight on their hearts.—On the day of Villeroy's departure they attempted a walk in the garden, but found it absolutely too much for their nerves, for the wind was high, and groaned awfully through the yew trees, as if lamenting the fate of the unfortunate victim who had often wandered under their shade, and had been felled a headless trunk within the precincts of his own domain. Most glad was Virginia and Augusta when the hour of repose arrived, when a short oblivion gave a temporary relief to their comfortless sensations. But brief was this interval of tranquillity, for they were both awakened by a tremendous noise in Mrs. Pelham's chamber, which was immediately followed by a violent and continued shrieking. Alarmed to the highest

pitch, they precipitated themselves from the bed, and catching some cloaths about them, flew to the door of Mrs. Pelham's apartment, which they vainly endeavoured to enter, for it was locked. The screaming continued, and they thundered as loud as they could at the door, crying out to be admitted. It was speedily opened by Hervey, who always slept in her mistress's chamber. She appeared terror-struck, and was so much confused and agitated, as to be unable for some time to give any explanation to elucidate the scene.

It was obvious that Mrs. Pelham was in a strong hysteric, and the united endeavours they all made to restore her to herself, for some time superseded every enquiry into the cause of her distraction. At length her shrieks were modulated to sobs, and she appeared to be getting gradually better, and Virginia had leisure to look round the room. She felt herself

extremely cold, which she attributed to her only being partly cloathed, but she soon discovered a stronger cause for the chill she experienced ; one of the windows was wide open, opposite to which lay several trunks heaped together on the floor. She hastened to shut the window ; and it is necessary here to observe, that most of the windows in French houses are made to open in a similar manner to some of those in England that conduct into a balcony ; the fastenings are very awkwardly contrived, and frequently give way on being shook by the wind, when the window of course bursts open, being constructed like a folding door. The wind being very high on this night, Hervey had piled several trunks one upon the other against the window, in order to prevent its flying open during the night, as it had frequently done in the day, however the trunks were not heavy enough to withstand the force of the storm, which burst the window open,

and precipitated the trunks upon the floor with a tremendous crash, which certainly was sufficient to have alarmed the strongest nerves.

Mrs. Pelham, who had but just fallen asleep, was awakened by the crash, and and the extreme terror she endured, had the effect of immediately producing a violent hysteric, and she continued for a long time shrieking in the greatest agony, unable to understand that there was no solid grounds for her boundless alarm. The first words she uttered were, "I will not stay in this place, I will leave it immediately—no person shall persuade me to remain here." She was at length made to understand the occasion of the violent noise that had so much terrified her, but even this failed to pacify her, she continued to protest she would not stay here. "The house is not habitable!" cried she, "I shall be buried under its ruins—I will not sleep another night in

it." She was so much disturbed and agitated that neither Augusta nor Virginia would quit her, and having dressed themselves they remained with her the rest of the night. They doubted not she would change her resolution of precipitately taking flight, when she became more composed, and reflected on the great expense she had already been at in respect to her present habitation, and the still greater her deserting it immediately would involve her in, as she must pay the year's rent, and it was not likely she would get the smallest remuneration for the various articles of furniture she must of necessity leave behind her, if she quitted Bourges thus suddenly. She was now too much agitated to resume her slumbers, and she declared to her companions, that they might prepare for their departure, for she was resolved to leave Bourges. She detested the place (she had never seen more of it than what she had passed in coming from the inn to her present

abode), as to the house it was like a sepulchre, and enough to make any body melancholy mad. It was the last place in the world Mrs. Villeroy ought to have come to to dispel her dejection—and it was plain too that Virginia was not the same creature, since they had been there, and for their sakes, as well as her own, she was resolved to go. Augusta now ventured to enquire where she proposed going to?

“I don’t know yet,” said Mrs. Pelham, who seemed not before to have considered that point; “but go I will, no matter where; I will not remain here.” After a short pause she continued, “My dear Colonel Villeroy, when he was advising me where to take up my residence mentioned Bourges or Moulin; I will get on if I can to Moulin. The climate must of course be still milder there, as it is farther south; yes, I should like to abide by his advice.”—Virginia observed,

that he had appeared to think there would be some imprudence in their venturing farther into the country. Mrs. Pelham returned, "I don't care for that, my dear; I may as well die in a French prison as in this dungeon." Her companions might have retorted, that, however she might be reconciled to dying in a French prison, they would willingly avoid the chance of living in one; but they were too wise and too good-natured to offer any reproach to her selfish observation.

Augusta said, that, as far as her knowledge of the country extended, it seemed as if it would be more expedient (in case a necessity arose for their leaving the country precipitately) to embark at Rochfort, or some port on that coast, though the voyage would perhaps be tedious from thence to England.

"Oh, as to the voyage," cried Mrs. Pelham, "I should prefer it being long,

for you know a sea voyage was prescribed for poor Clarence——I beg your pardon, my dear,” perceiving Augusta change countenance, “but you know a sea voyage is considered highly beneficial in a consumptive case, and my disorder certainly partakes of that nature ; however, I am resolved not to die at Bourges, unless I am doomed to expire within twelve hours, for before that time has elapsed, we will be out of it. So, my dear girls, you had better lose no time in preparing for your departure. I don’t know what in the world I shall do without Colonel Villeroy.”

“ Ah ! what indeed ! ” thought Virginia, who felt provoked in her heart with Mrs. Pelham, for not having betrayed some symptoms of her antipathy to Bourges before Villeroy’s departure, for she was convinced if he had not imagined that they were positively settled for some time, he would not have left them ;

and had Mrs. Pelham but taken this sudden caprice twenty-four hours sooner, he might still have continued their *compagnon de voyage*. But both Virginia and Augusta yet doubted that this project would be put into execution, and therefore delayed making the preparations Mrs. Pelham advised, though Hervey was at that moment occupied, in obedience to her mistress's commands, in packing up her trunks.

On the appearance of daylight, Mrs. Pelham entreated Virginia would go and make arrangements for her journey; "for I must depend on you now, my dear," she continued, "as Colonel Villeroy is gone, to manage these things for me. Hervey must discharge the servants, and go to Monsieur Le Gueux, and tell him I have done with his house; perhaps he may find some one to take it from me, if not, I suppose I must pay the year's rent."

Augusta and Virginia exchanged looks of amazement at finding that she really was in earnest, and retired to their chamber actually to prepare for recommencing their journey.

Augusta had learnt to do without her *femme de chambre*, whom she had left behind her, as she could not have brought her with her without hiring an additional carriage on purpose for her accommodation.

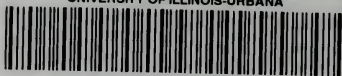
Augusta had never been affluent until her mother married Mr. Temple, she was not therefore fastidious.

Virginia had always been accustomed to economize, and never felt the want of superfluities. She possessed an extraordinary portion of mental energy and bodily activity, and never murmured at any difficulty or deprivation; she was more reflective than Augusta had been before

the consequences of her hasty union had taught her to think; but experience had now supplied those deficiencies in her, which a habit of seriously considering had early superseded in Virginia.

END OF VOL. II.

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